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Foreword

The centerpiece of this omnibus issue is the 2003 Benjamin Eby Lecture, presented at Conrad Grebel University College last November by John E. Toews, the former president of the College. The equal product of many years experience and much reflection, "Rethinking the Meaning of Ordination: Toward a Biblical Theology of Leadership Affirmation," is bound to provoke discussion and debate. In fact, it already has: We are pleased to present here, in tandem with that Lecture, an invited essay by Loren Johns, entitled "Ordination and Pastoral Leadership: A Response to John E. Toews."

Two substantial papers complete the main body of this issue. Longtime University of Manitoba sociologist Leo Driedger traces "external" factors, as distinct from "internal" factors identified by church growth researchers such as Lyle Schaller and Christian Schwarz, that account for the development of Mennonite churches in Winnipeg. Tripp York, a doctoral student at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, seeks to "uncover what it means to be a church predicated on the memory of its martyrs" as he mines Balthasar Hubmaier's teaching for insight into the "formative capabilities" of the Lord's Supper today.

With this issue we revert to publishing more book reviews than has lately been our norm. Readers will find an array of reviews examining recent releases in theology, church history, biography, Biblical studies and several other fields. We're still trying to catch up, and we appreciate the patience of reviewers whose diligent efforts of some months ago are only now getting into print.

Amazingly attentive readers will notice that this issue departs from the previously announced schedule. The Eby Lecture was originally slated for our Spring 2004 number, but that issue will instead be devoted to the work of writer Rudy Wiebe. While we make no firm promises – we don't do that anymore – we do intend at this point to follow the following schedule. The Fall 2004 issue will deal with the theology of John Milbank; the Winter 2005 issue will feature papers from the 2003 Mennonite World Conference plus the 2004 Bechtel Lecture by MWC president Nancy Heisey; and the Spring 2005 issue will offer proceedings of the latest Women Doing Theology conference.

We invite readers to stay with us for these and other forthcoming issues as we continue to provide a vibrant forum for thoughtful, sustained discussion of spirituality, ethics, theology, and culture from a broadly-based Mennonite perspective.

Stephen A. Jones, *Managing Editor*
C. Arnold Snyder, *Academic Editor*

Benjamin Eby Lectureship

Benjamin Eby (1785-1853) typified, and possibly inaugurated, Mennonite culture in Upper Canada. He and his wife Mary arrived in Waterloo County from Pennsylvania in 1807. By 1812 he was ordained bishop, and in 1815 he was overseeing construction of the area's first schoolhouse. He provided outstanding leadership in the church and in education throughout his life, all the while supporting his family as a farmer. For this pioneer, scholarship was a necessary and logical extension of his Christian faith. The Benjamin Eby Lectureship, named in his honor and established at Conrad Grebel University College in the 1980s, offers faculty members an opportunity to share research and reflections with the broader College and University community.

Cover Photo Winnipeg, January 1962: Joel Schmidt (right) and Ed Unrau examine scale model of proposed new Ft. Rouge (Ft. Garry) MB Church. Photo supplied by *The Canadian Mennonite* Photo Collection, Mennonite Archives of Ontario.

The 2003 Benjamin Eby Lecture

Rethinking the Meaning of Ordination: Toward a Biblical Theology of Leadership Affirmation

John E. Toews

Introduction

I have been interested in and involved in church leadership my entire adult life. I come from a family with a long history of influential and significant church leaders. I have taught in three different Mennonite colleges where we worked hard to nurture young people into church ministry. I worked for nearly twenty years in a seminary setting where the clear mandate was the training of ministers for the church. I personally have been involved in church leadership roles – local, national, bi-national, institutional. I believe in the importance of clearly defined and strong church leadership. Yet throughout this forty-five year history I have struggled with the concept of ordination as the means of affirming and legitimating church leaders. The theology and the practice of ordination seems out of sync with an Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of the church and church ministry.

The ordination of ministers is a long-time practice in the Christian church whereby the church "sets aside" selected individuals and both recognizes them as ministers and empowers them to be leaders. The act of ordination in many churches is viewed as a sacramental event – it confers lifetime grace, authority, and status. While many Protestant churches, including Mennonite churches, have tried to de-sacramentalize ordination, the long-time underlying assumption and reality is sacramental. It continues to confer lifetime status, it is understood as "a life-shaping and identity-giving moment" (*Mennonite Polity*, 30), it places one into a special "office of ministry," and it confers special privileges and status.

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The tradition and practice of ordination is increasingly being questioned in the ecumenical church. Thomas Talley, in an assessment of the state of ordination thinking in the Episcopal Church, asserts that "hardly any area of liturgical and sacramental theology and practice is more disputed" (Talley, 4). John Brug says the same is true in the Lutheran tradition (Brug, 263). The questions are multiple: What is ordination? What does it mean? Who should be ordained? Who ordains? Is laying on of hands an essential part of ordination? Is there a biblical basis for ordination? What does ordination give?

The Mennonite Church traditions (MC and GC) reflect a long practice of ordination for the threefold offices of the church – bishop, preacher, deacon. While the polity of the traditions has changed significantly over the years, the practice of ordination has remained constant (see *Mennonite Polity*, 32-72). The "recovery of the Anabaptist Vision" movement, especially the Concern Group and the Dean's Seminar at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, did raise questions about ordination. John H. Yoder, one of the key theologians of both groups, stated that "there is . . . no ground for seeing in the New Testament usage a clear conception of ordination as applying to some Christians and not to others" (Yoder, 1969, 61). Selected individuals in the 1960s and '70s refused ordination because of these questions, but the larger church continued the practice. More recently it has even strengthened the practice of ordination by linking it to the "office of ministry" and by the use of oil in the service of ordination in some parts of the church. The introduction of anointing with oil, or Chrismation, is an OT tradition associated with the coronation of kings and the consecration of priests, and was deemed to impart a holy character to the anointed by removing them from the realm of the profane. The early church did not practice anointing with oil because of its rejection of priestly conceptions of church leadership. The practice was not introduced into the Christian tradition until the Middle Ages (see Ferguson, 1974, 282). Its recent use in the Mennonite Church is puzzling.

The recent emphasis on ordination and the increased "sacralization" of the practice did not involve any careful review of the biblical texts. The *Mennonite Polity* document quotes Erland Waltner to say that the practice of ordination has "a clear biblical basis" (35), but does not examine the relevant texts. John Esau, one of the key leaders in the drafting of *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*, informs me that the committees

formulating the document thought the biblical texts were too early to be helpful (July 7, 2003, email).

The most recent *Mennonite Church Ministers Manual* acknowledges the lack of New Testament teaching, but then makes a most interesting move. "The roots of ordination," it asserts, "go back to the Hebrew Bible and the instructions given to Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests for the congregation of God's people (Ex. 29 and Lev. 8-10)" [see *Ministers Manual*, 1998, 144]. That is a hermeneutical move not made in the history of the church until the sacradotalization of church ministers as priests in the Constantinian church.

Mennonite Brethren, the second largest Mennonite body in North America, began to "ordain" ministers in the late 1860s with a great deal of reluctance, due to questions about the biblical foundation for ordination and concerns about the hierarchical values and structures implicit in the practice of ordination (see Heidebrecht, 62ff.). This early ambivalence has continued to characterize Mennonite Brethren thinking. F. C. Peters initiated the most recent round of study and discussion in his 1969 keynote address to the General Conference by asking, "If in theory we do not have a sacramental view of ordination are we in danger of operating functionally on such a premise?" (Peters, 4). Peters's question resulted in four study conference papers (Orlando Wiebe, 1970; John Regehr, 1976; Victor Adrian, 1980; Tim Geddert, 1994), one thesis (Harry Heidebrecht, 1971) and one General Conference resolution (1981). All of the studies and the resolution struggle with the theological problematic of ordination. The 1981 resolution was barely approved before there were renewed calls for a study of the question of ordination. By 1987 the restlessness was so great that the Board of Reference and Counsel publicly announced that it would again study the question (the 1994 Study Conference).

Two issues create uncertainty in studies on ordination: the weak biblical foundations, and the relation of ordination to the gifting of all believers for ministry.

A series of biblical scholars since the 1970s have raised serious questions about the biblical basis for ordination, e.g., Giles, Ferguson, Flemming, Kilmartin, Morris, Peacock, Schweizer, Warkentin, D.F. Wright. Martin Kilmartin asserts that "almost every issue related to the subject remains unresolved" (Kilmartin, 45). David Wright stresses that "uncertainties attend much of the New Testament material supposedly germane to ordination. Only one text, 1 Timothy 4.14, can with firm confidence be regarded as attesting an observance

recognizable in subsequent church history as ordination to 'the ministry'" (D.F. Wright, 7). Wright goes on to claim that "a yawning gulf is exposed between the Pastorals and the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus over a century later" (Wright, 7). Dean Flemming states that "there is no evidence that ordination to office was a regular practice in the early church" (Flemming, 244). Kevin Giles adds that "the fog is almost impenetrable" regarding ordination (Giles, 173).

The problem is that the NT outlines a clear theology of church ministry based on charisma, but says little about the affirmation or installation of people for ministry. Christ gives gifts to all believers for the well-being and ministry of the church. Some people are given special gifts to equip and order the many diverse gifts in the church (see Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4). But there is very little evidence for rites to commission or affirm these people for ministry. The first evidence for commissioning known as ordination comes from Hippolytus's *Apostolic Tradition* in the early third century. There is no unanimity among scholars about the use of anything resembling ordination in the first two centuries of the church. The reason is the scarcity of textual evidence for commissioning services or procedures. Any confidence in the use of commissioning procedures in those centuries is based on the assumption of uniformity with the understanding and practice of the orthodox churches in the third century.

The primary purpose of this lecture is to examine the biblical evidence claimed in support of ordination to church ministry. It begins with the texts considered foundational, 1 and 2 Timothy, and then moves to other NT texts that have been viewed as relevant or supportive of ordination. The paper concludes with a brief a proposal for affirming people in the church for ministry.

The Foundation Texts

> *1 Timothy 4.14* Continuously do not neglect the gift (*charisma*) in you which was given you by means of prophecy (*dia* = ablative of means) in association with the laying on of the hands (*meta* = genitive of attendant circumstances) of the elder group.

This is the anchor text for the Christian theology and practice of ordination for ministry. Most commentators see here a clear teaching and practice of ordination. Donald Guthrie links the gift with the event of ordination to ministry (Guthrie, 98). Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann see the event as a sacramental act in which the grace of office is transferred. The hands serve as a means of transferring power (Dibelius and Conzelmann, 70). Raymond Collins asserts that "this is a ritualized gesture signifying a transfer of power. . . ." (Collins, 130; see also Bassler, 87; Knight, 209).

A closer look at the text raises serious questions about this interpretation. The purpose of 1 Timothy is to instruct Timothy on dealing with false teachers within the church who are leading astray some Christians in different house churches. The larger text unit for this particular text is 4.6-16. Timothy's personal responsibility is the agenda. The unit consists of two paragraphs, vv. 6-10, 11-16. The first paragraph offers instructions vis-à-vis the false teachers. In contrast to these teachers, Timothy must guard his own life and teaching. The second paragraph instructs him to function as a model (vv. 15-16) in godly living despite his youth (v. 12), in the public reading and teaching of scripture (v. 13), in the nurture of the spiritual gift (charisma) given him (v. 14). Timothy has received a charisma, a spiritual gift. A charisma denotes a special endowment of the Spirit that enables a believer to carry out some function or ministry in the community. What the precise gift is we are not told. All we know is that Timothy is to nurture the gift he received.

The gift is associated with prophecy. In fact, it was given through a prophecy that was associated with the laying on of the hands of the leadership body of the church (*presbyteron* is singular). That is, Timothy's gift involved a charismatic communication and community affirmation; the Spirit communicated something and the church responded affirmatively. A prophecy involving Timothy has already been referred to in 1.18, "prophecies leading to you." That prophecy seems to involve "Paul's" finding Timothy, and so is probably not the same prophecy as in this text ("Paul" is in quotation marks to indicate uncertainty and debate about the authorship of the Pastoral Letters).

Not only does the text not define the nature of the charisma, it does not define the relationship of the charisma to the prophecy and the laying on of hands. Further, the whole event only confers a gift; it does not confer authority or office. The text says nothing more than that Timothy received an undefined

charisma that is to be nurtured as a model for other believers. The text does not say this charisma is for office or of office, nor that the charisma is the ground for the authority of Timothy. Furthermore, charisma and prophecy are features associated with charismatic leadership, not with leadership of office. Timothy is never called an elder, so ordination to the presbytery is hardly the suggestion here. In fact, he is not even a local church leader or model of a particular office in this letter. He is certainly not "the pastor" of the church, as in so much popular literature. Rather, he is "Paul's" missionary assistant who visits the churches as "Paul's" personal representative with the intent of returning to "Paul" soon. He simply represents "Paul" to the churches in the apostle's absence.

1 Tim. 4.14 does not indicate the nature of the gift Timothy received or what the referent of laying on of hands is. It could be Timothy's conversion/ baptism as much as his gifting for ministry. I. Howard Marshall correctly argues that "it is important not to interpret the passage anachronistically in the light of later concepts of ordination" (Marshall, 569).

> *1 Timothy 5.22* And do not be hastily laying (present imperative) hands on, nor participating in another's sins; continuously keep yourself pure (present imperative).

The context and text have puzzled scholars for centuries. What is the relation of vv. 21-25 to vv. 17-20? Do we have one text unit addressing presbyters or two text units addressing presbyters and sinners as two different groups? How does the personal admonition to Timothy in v. 23 fit into the logic of the structure?

Interpreters are divided over the meaning of v. 22. Does it refer to ordination or to the restoration of a disciplined believer? The issue has to do with the relationship of v. 22 to the preceding. V. 20 indicates that there are elders in the church who are sinning. V. 21 says they must be rebuked publicly. If v. 22 is linked to the preceding, then it outlines some guidelines for the replacement of rebuked elders. V. 22 consists of three imperatives. The first follows from what has just been said in v. 21. Do not be hasty in laying on hands for leadership ministries in the church. Exercise caution in the laying

on of hands because of the problem of sin in people's lives. The problem of covering up the sins of leaders leads to the next imperative, Take no part in the sins of others. The last imperative, Keep yourself pure, suggests that the second one means Do not involve yourself in the kinds of sins that have caused some leaders to be rebuked (so Fee, 1984, 91-2; Guthrie, 107; Kelly, 127; Meier, 234-36).

The alternative interpretation argues that vv. 22 and 23 are not linked to the preceding. Instead, they represent individual and separate items of counsel to Timothy. V. 22 is then interpreted to mean the reconciliation of a disciplined believer, an interpretation that links the concerns of v. 22 with 24. The restoration of penitent sinners was part of early church practice (2 Cor. 2.6-11; Jas. 5.15), and was accompanied in the later church (third century on) by the laying of hands (so Dibelius and Conzelmann, 80; Collins, 149; Hanson, 103; Marshall, 621). Both Tertullian and Nicholas of Lyra understood the text in this way.

What is clear is that the text instructs caution in the laying on of hands because of the problem of human fallenness. V. 25 adds a positive reason for such caution: it takes time to discern the good works of some people. The specific referent of this caution is unknown, but probably has more to do with restoring repentant sinners than with any kind of appointment to church ministry.

> *2 Timothy 1.6* On account of which I am reminding you to be rekindling the gift of God which is in you by means (*dia* = ablative of means) of the laying on of my hands.

The purpose of 2 Timothy is to call Timothy to "Paul's" side and to appeal to his loyalty. V. 6 is the opening statement of the first appeal, vv. 6-14. It follows the thanksgiving of the letter, vv. 3-5, which concludes with gratitude for the faith Timothy has received from his maternal lineage. The text unit urges Timothy to be steadfast and loyal.

While most interpreters see in v. 6 a reference to Timothy's ordination, nothing in the text suggests such a referent. The "therefore, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God" must refer to what precedes in the text, that is, to the faith Timothy received and owned personally ("which is in you"). The gift of God is the gift of trusting the gospel. That gift is linked to the Holy Spirit at the

beginning and end of the text unit (vv. 7, 14). The Spirit gives power, love, and self-control, and "dwells within you." What follows only supports this interpretation. The concern is faithfulness to the gospel. The "by means of the laying on of my hands" refers to an initiatory event akin to the incidents in Acts in which the Spirit was received through the laying on of apostolic hands (so Marshall, 698; Wright, 6). The point of v. 6 is an affirmation of initial faith, not an affirmation for church ministry or office.

Summary of Teachings in the Pastoral Letters

The Pastoral Letters, the foundational texts for the church's doctrine and practice of ordination, turn out to say little about it. Wright suggests that only one biblical text, 1 Tim. 4.14, resembles the church's understanding and practice of ordination. This study raises questions if even that text can be claimed for this matter. 1 Tim. 4.14 tells us only that Timothy received a charisma through the laying on of hands. We do not know what the gift was, nor what the relationship between it and prophecy and the laying on of hands might be. If church leadership is involved it is charismatic leadership, not the leadership of office or position. 1 Tim. 5.22 says only that Timothy should be cautious in the practice of laying on hands, whether church leadership or restoration of an excommunicated believer is involved. 2 Tim. 1.6 refers to Timothy's initiation into the Christian faith, not his affirmation for church leadership.

On close examination the foundation texts prove to be sand, not stone. We therefore would do well to practice the admonition to Timothy to be cautious about using these texts to construct a theology and practice of ordination.

Other Relevant New Testament Texts

A series of other texts in the NT describe the practice of "the laying on of hands" and have been used to make the case for the practice of ordination.

Acts 6.5-6 describes the selection of seven leaders to assist the apostles by serving tables:

and the word pleased the whole multitude, and they chose . . . and they set them before the apostles, and having prayed they laid the hands on them.

Acts 8.17 pictures an apostolic mission to new converts in Samaria:
Peter and John prayed with them . . . and they laid the hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit.

V. 18 adds that "through the laying on of the apostle's hands" the Spirit was given."

Acts 9.17 narrates the healing and commissioning of Paul following his encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus:
Ananias . . . entered the house, and having laid his hands upon him, said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord sent me, Jesus who appeared to you in the way by which you came, in order that you may see again and may be filled with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 13.3 describes the calling of Barnabas and Saul from the churches in Antioch to a special but undefined ministry:
And there were in Antioch in the church prophets and teachers . . . and while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart to me Barnabas and Saul for the purpose of the work to which I have already called them.' Then having fasted and prayed and having laid hands on them, they loosed them (apoluo).

Acts 19.6 pictures Paul's mediation of the Spirit to disciples in Ephesus:
And when Paul laid the hands on them the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they were speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Hebrews 6.2 urges that the elementary doctrines be left behind, one of which is "the laying on of hands." The context makes it clear that initiation into the Christian faith is described by "the laying on of hands."

Commentary
There are three types of "laying on of hands" texts in the NT. One type describes healings. Jesus healed by laying on hands, e.g., Mark 8.25; Matthew 19.13, 15. The same language is used in Acts 19.11 and 28.8, and perhaps also in Acts 20.10 and James 5.14-15. Touch is the primary element in this

laying on of hands, as in actions of blessing in the OT. The second type is associated with initiation and incorporation of people into the Christian church. The third type is connected with affirmation for church ministry.

The other relevant texts deal with two of these types. Four of the texts deal with initiation into the Christian faith and church, e.g., Acts 8.17; 9.17; 19.6; Hebrews 6.2. All are linked to prayer and to the coming of the Holy Spirit into the lives of believers. This use of the laying on of hands is without parallel in the OT and in Judaism.

Two of the texts deal with affirmations for church ministries, e.g., Acts 6.6 and 13.3. The narrative of Acts is clearly concerned with affirming people for ministries in the church, but the affirmation takes place in different ways. People are selected by community election in chapter 6, by the calling of fellow leaders in chapter 13, by the appointment of the apostles in 14.23. The selection of leaders in 13.3 and 14.23 involves preparatory prayer and fasting, but not so in 6.6 and 13.3. There is laying on of hands in 6.6 and 13.3, but not in 14.23. There is no suggestion in 6.6 and 13.3 that the laying on of hands involved the imparting of spiritual gifts. Rather, it was an act of recognition of gifts already possessed. The seven were required to be "full of the Spirit" prior to their commissioning (vv. 3, 5). The laying of hands on them is a "lay" commissioning to a particular service. The appointment is not unlike that of the Levites. Like the latter, the seven are dedicated by the entire congregation for acts of service that are subordinate to the apostles, as the Levites were subordinate to the priests. Barnabas and Saul were already among the prophets and teachers of the church before the laying on of hands. They are simply commissioned for a specific "work" (*ergon*) [so Barrett, 599; Fitzmyer, 351; Witherington, 393-94].

The act of laying on hands is a corporate affair in both texts. It involves the whole church in chapter 6. The subject of "they set . . . having prayed, they placed their hands on them" is the people (the Codex Bezae, D, sixth century, [in its] shift of responsibility from the people to the apostles reflects later church ecclesiology). The community elected and accredited the seven to the apostles. The latter made the seven representatives of the whole community by laying hands on them. In chapter 13 the laying on of hands is by the body of prophets and teachers. Barnabas and Paul are equals among these leaders now detailed for a special task. They are representatives,

shaliachs, of the whole released (*apoluo*) for a special assignment. The release language may be significant. Barnabas and Saul are not "sent off," as in most translations, but "cut loose." They are freed from one ministry for another.

Neither Acts 6.6 or 13.3 look like ordination texts. Leaders are blessed for the gifts of the Spirit they already have, and are affirmed and released for specific ministry assignments by the laying on of hands.

Summary of New Testament Evidence

The practice of laying on hands for initiation into the Christian faith and community is clear: 2 Tim. 1.6, Acts 8.17; 9.17; 19.6; Hebrews 6.2. Hands are laid on new believers to bless them. This blessing is associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit to the new believers.

Two texts link the laying of hands and affirmation for church ministry: Acts 6.6 and 13.3. Both are narrative texts. They report that people already gifted by the Spirit or already active in ministry were corporately affirmed for specialized ministries. No special gift, power, or position is involved in the laying on of hands.

The 1 Tim. 4.14 text is so ambiguous that it is not obvious if initiation into the Christian faith or affirmation for ministry is the subject. Whatever the occasion, Timothy receives a charisma by means of a prophetic word.

In addition, other texts specifically speak of appointment to leadership tasks but say nothing about the "laying on of hands" or refer to any kind of ordination procedure. Barnabas and Paul "appointed (*xeirotoneo*) elders from among them (the disciples, v. 22) in every church" (Acts 14.23). Titus is appointed (*xeirotoneo*) to accompany Paul to Jerusalem with the offering that symbolizes the pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8.19). Titus is instructed to appoint (*kathistemi*) elders in every town (Titus 1.5). Leaders are being appointed for local congregational ministries and for very important trans-local, inter-congregational, even cross-cultural people-to-people ministries, without any known legitimation by ordination. Or, there are texts that list leaders in local churches (e.g., Rom. 16, Phil. 4) that say nothing about ordination or commissioning to these ministries.

Light from the Old Testament and Judaism

The New Testament offers little evidence to support the church's practice of ordination for ministry. But are we missing something by starting with the NT? Was not ordination practised in the Old Testament? And was not that practice continued in Judaism, for example, in the ordination of rabbis? It is not clear that ordination was practised in the OT. But the laying on of hands was practised. Could not that practice illumine the similar practice in the early church?

Laying on of Hands in the Old Testament

The laying on of hands is associated with four different events in the OT: 1) the transfer of the people's sin to the scapegoat (Lev. 16.21); 2) the consecration of the Levites (Num. 8.10); 3) Moses's appointment of Joshua as his successor (Num. 27.18, 23; Dt. 34.9); 4) the communication of blessing or healing (Gen. 48.14ff.; 2 Ki. 4.34; 13.21).

The four events are described with two different words, *samakh* for the first three, *sim* for the communication of blessing. David Daube has proposed that the two words denote quite different things. *Samakh* means "to lean upon for the purpose of transferring something in order to create a substitute or replacement." It involves the pouring of one's personality into the substitute (see Daube). *Sim*, in contrast, is a gentle term that means "to place on in order to bless." It carries no connotation of transferring one's personality or creating a substitute. When associated with sacrifice or the scapegoat offering of the Day of Atonement, *samakh* means to transfer one's sins to a substitute so that it can bear the punishment instead of the person. *Samakh* is used for the consecration of the Levites because they as a class are created as a substitute for the firstborn in Israel (Lev. 8.15-19). *Samakh* also is used for the appointment of Joshua as Moses's successor, suggesting that Joshua is his replacement or substitute.

M.C. Sansom has qualified the Daube thesis. *Samakh*, he argues, is a much more nuanced term than Daube suggests (Sansom, 323-26; see also D.P Wright, 433ff.). It has two meanings, "transference" and "acknowledgment or identification." The term involves a transference only in two cases, the Day of Atonement ritual and the appointment of Joshua, and acknowledgment or identification in the other uses.

The two texts that narrate the appointment of Joshua do not indicate what, if anything, he received in the event. Deuteronomy 34.9 says he received the spirit of wisdom through the laying on of Moses's hands. But Num. 27.18 says Joshua was commissioned because he already possessed the divine spirit. Furthermore, whatever was "transferred" in the laying on of hands, it was not in full measure as with Moses. God spoke face-to-face with Moses but Joshua will be instructed by Eleazar; Moses was the servant of God but Joshua is Moses's minister (Joshua 1.1). N.H. Snaith asserts that the "laying on of hands" here "has nothing to do with any sort of ordination. Joshua already has the God-given ability. Moses lays his hands upon him before Eleazar in order visibly to lay his last commands on him" (Snaith, 311).

It is doubtful if the laying on of hands in *samakh* can be used as any basis for a theology and practice of ordination in the OT. The term and the practice is used in very restricted cases. The practice is never used for the appointment of priests or other religious leaders in the OT, e.g., the 70 elders of Israel (Num. 11.16ff.), prophets. Allen Guenther argues that "the word has nothing to do with the concept of 'ordination,' as we think of it" (Sept. 6, 1991 written note). Furthermore, none of the *samakh* passages influenced the practice of the early church. The same can be said of Judaism, as will soon be shown. The subsequent influence of the Joshua narrative is so minimal that J.K Parratt can say that the Joshua commissioning "has not exercised a normative influence upon either Judaism or Christianity" (212; cf. Warkentin).

What Happens in Judaism?

Most NT scholarship simply assumes that Second Temple Judaism continued an OT practice of ordaining by the laying on of hands, and that the early church adapted its practice from Judaism. Textual evidence, however, does not support this assumption. *Samakh* is used 150 times in the Mishnah, the authoritative Jewish interpretation of the Torah compiled around 200 CE, but all references deal with sacrifice, not with ordination to ministry (see Hoffman, 15-16). There also is no evidence in this or later literature for ordination by the laying on of hands. The texts are so silent that Lawrence Hoffman concludes "there was never any laying on of hands" (Hoffman, 17).

Leaders are ordained in Judaism. Three stages of the practice are discernable. Up to around 135 CE individual rabbis ordain their disciples. From 135 to 200 the Patriarch of Judaism alone is authorized to ordain. From

about 200 on, the Patriarch and the rabbis of the Scholar Class together ordain. But three things must be noted. Evidence for the practice is too late (post-70 CE) to have influenced the early church. Secondly, it is never by the laying on of hands. The dominant practice seems to have been by proclamation, but even the evidence for this is not clear. Thirdly, while many kinds of shaliachs (representatives or delegates) are appointed during this period, the procedures for such appointment are not obvious. In short, Judaism has an active practice of selecting and appointing leaders, but the procedures for affirming leaders is not at all clear. And there is no evidence for the laying on of hands.

Reading Back through the New Testament

Leaders are necessary for any movement; the life of the church depends on leaders. Therefore, Jesus called people "to follow" him and appointed them "to go preach, heal the sick, cast out demons . . . ." Christ gifts every church with ministers to enable and order the many gifts of the Spirit within the body so that the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts. Missionaries appoint leaders in young churches so that the church can be centered and grow (Acts 14.23; Titus 1.5).

What is striking in this theology and practice of church ministry is the absence of any clear teaching or practice for the affirmation of leaders. Leaders are important and necessary. Ministers are chosen or appointed. Except for the missionary situation, the selection process always seems to involve the whole congregation or the collective leadership of the church (*presybyteron*). But there is little evidence for how these ministers were affirmed (or ordained), and certainly no clear teaching on how this should be done. There is no evidence for something like the later church's practice of ordination. Jesus did not "lay hands on" those whom he called and charged. The gift texts (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4) say nothing about laying on of hands or any other form of public legitimation. The historic "foundation texts" for the practice of ordination to ministry are ambiguous at best. Timothy received a charisma through prophetic utterance and the laying on of hands at some point in his life, but that experience is not linked to a church leadership role. The two "laying on of hands" texts in Acts describe public blessing for gifts already given by the Spirit.

New Testament scholars are agreed that the few "laying on of hands" texts that we have do not suggest any creation of substitutes, or the transference of authority, or the imparting of personality. The laying on of hands is linked to the Spirit, corporate prayer, and blessing, not appointment to office or role. A series of scholars argue that the only OT linkage in laying on of hands is *sim*, blessing, not *samakh* (see Daube, 238-40; Ferguson, 1975, 2, and 1974, 284; Parratt, 213-14; Culpepper, 481). The laying on of hands accompanied by prayer confers a blessing and petitions the favor of God on the leaders gifted for ministry. The laying on of hands is an enacted prayer. This reading is reinforced by one of the early translations of the Greek New Testament: the Syriac translation used the equivalent of *sim* rather than *samakh* for the laying on of hands.

Ordination through the laying on of hands as the transference of charisma, power, and authority is not taught or practised in the NT. What is practised is the affirmation of the gifts of the Spirit to the church for ministry and the blessing of God for those gifts.

One other body of NT evidence is relevant and important here. Scholars are agreed that apostles, prophets, teachers, and pastor-shepherds were not offices in the early church. They were not appointed or initiated by the community. These roles were gifts of the risen Christ to the church. What about the role of "elder"? Is this not a church office to which people were appointed by the laying on of hands? Alastair Campbell, following A.E. Harvey, has demonstrated that "elders" were senior men in the community and the leaders of influential families. Their position was recognized by custom, not by any kind of official appointment to a definable office. It denoted prestige, not office (Campbell; Harvey; see also Marshall, 172). So, again, laying on of hands recognizes what is; it does not confer anything new or empower for a new role.

So What?

This paper argues that ordination for ministry through the laying on of hands as practised in the church is without biblical foundation. There is no specific and clear textual basis for the theology and practice of "setting aside" for full-time ministry, for giving special status, and for legitimating authority and power for church office. Furthermore, the practice serves to divide clergy

from laity, to undermine the teaching of the NT that leaders must be servants, and to contradict the NT's repeated emphasis that all believers are called to and gifted for ministry.

In addition, there is no biblical linkage of personal call to ministry and ordination through the laying on of hands, as practised in the protestant church. The laying on of hands on the seven in Acts 6 and on Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13 were not the community's responses to an inner call sensed by these people; at least no call language is used in the texts. If the 1 Tim. 4.14 text speaks about laying on of hands for ministry, an interpretation challenged in this paper, no personal call to ministry is mentioned. The notion of an inner call to ministry and the ordination through the laying on of hands are never connected in the Bible or the early church. Affirmation for ministry is based on giftedness and community selection, not an inner sense of call. The seven in Acts 6 and Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13 first learned of a call from the church, not from an inner experience. If the call of the church was later confirmed through an inner sense of call, we are not told about it. The church called, the church affirmed through the laying on of hands, the people so called and affirmed ministered (see Falk for a thorough biblical challenge to the idea of "call" to ministry, and Culbertson and Shippee for the skepticism of the early church about personal calls).

If laying on of hands does not mean ordination as sacrament – the view of the Roman Catholic Church and many protestant churches that it communicates grace and gifts that profoundly shape character and confer special rights and duties, or ordination as authorization – the view of Luther and Calvin that it confers authority to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, what does it mean? It could mean commissioning for service. The seven in Acts 6 and Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13 had hands laid on them to commission them to a particular "work." The laying on of hands in commissioning says that the church believes that God has gifted "these people" with gifts for a particular ministry, and the church commissions "these people" for this ministry.

Or, the laying on of hands could mean church confirmation and blessing. Again, the seven in Acts 6 and Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13 were gifted by the Spirit before the call of the church. The laying on of hands is a confirmation of the gift(s) of God and a prayer of blessing to God for the fruitful exercise of these gifts in ministry.

A careful reading of the biblical texts would hardly permit meanings other than commissioning or confirmation/blessing. But that is to address the issue only on the basis of specific texts. The question of how the church selects and affirms its leaders must be based on more than specific texts whose meaning is ambiguous. It must ultimately be based on a theology of church. If the church is a peoplehood, a community, a body, a family of God (see Toews, 1989), then that theology must shape its theology of ministry affirmation. Such a theology calls for both a theology of ministry and a practice of ministry affirmation that is consistent with the nature of the church discerning/calling and affirming people. Ministers in the church cannot be self-chosen but must be called out by the church. The criteria for such discerning and calling are a servant spirit, giftedness for ministry, and godly character. The ministers are publicly commissioned and blessed by the church. The churchly laying on of hands together with prayer is an appropriate way to bless and commission for a specific ministry.

Because ordination language is so loaded with "sacramental," "authorization," and "proper succession" baggage, the church should not use it to describe or to understand the meaning of the laying on of hands. Such a desacramentalization will free the church from a host of problems – e.g., ordination as status and power, ordination for life, clergy-laity distinctions – and free it to lay hands on many people to confirm and bless them for ministry in and for the church.

An Historical Postscript

If ordination to church ministry is without clear biblical foundation, what is the origin of the theology and practice? It emerged in the third century of Christian history. The development of a theology and practice of ordination is part of a much larger ecclesiological development, the centralization of church power and authority, the development of a clergy (priestly) class distinct from the other members in the church (laity), the sacramentalization of the Lord's Supper (see Culbertson and Shippee, Faivre, Hinson, Volz). David Bosch makes the case that "the institutionalization of church offices" was one of the characteristics of the Constantinian dispensation. "The clericalization of the church," he continues, "went hand in hand with the sacerdotalizing of the

clergy" (Bosch, 467-68). The history of this development is very instructive, and alone should give churches in the believers or free church tradition pause in the use of a practice that fundamentally contradicts their theology of church and church ministry.

What Then Shall We Do?

If we grant the argument of this paper, what shall we do practically in the church? I suggest the following: 1) discontinue the use of ordination language and practice, and unhook affirmation for church ministry from all forms of privilege and status (e.g., offices, titles, special tax deductions). 2) Teach that ministry belongs to the whole people of God; every Christian is gifted for ministry. 3) Teach that there are ministry gifts whose function is to enable and order the many different gifts in the church. 4) Practice the discernment of gifts in the church. 5) Base selection for church ministry on the discernment of the church, not on the notion of personal call. 6) Recognize that authority in ministry derives from the character of the minister and the ministry accepted and discharged, not from status or official legitimation. 7) Develop a creative ceremony to bless and commission people called by the church for specific ministries.

Blessing/commissioning services would thus replace ordination services. By definition blessing/commissioning services are both more inclusive and more limiting. They are more inclusive in that the many ministry gifts in the church can be blessed/commissioned regularly, e.g., Sunday school teachers, school teachers, administrators, healers, pastors, evangelists. They are more limiting because the blessing/commissioning would be for a specific task, e.g., pastoring a specific church, shepherding a conference of churches, administering an institution or agency of the church, teaching Sunday school for the current year, planting a church in a specific location.

I conclude with an email exchange with John Esau, formerly of the Ministerial Office of the US General Conference Mennonite Church. He was one of the people to whom I sent a draft copy of this lecture for feedback. He recognizes the nonexistence of biblical foundations for the practice of ordination. But he wants to keep the practice and reframe it "in the direction of a blessing of the church," and thereby "endow it with meanings appropriate to Anabaptist Mennonite theology" (Oct. 7, 2003 email). My response to

John was that "the practice of 'ordination' undermines, even contradicts, that goal. Ordination theologically, historically, ritualistically, and practically sacerdotalizes the role of church ministry – it confers special status and privilege by the state, by society, and by members of the church, if we like it or not. The ritual of ordination itself creates a world view and value system. That is, rituals are more than external signs of inner realities. They, in fact, define realities, and the reality created by the ritual of ordination is a sacerdotal one – it sets a person apart and grants special status and privilege. Add to that the problematic of the Constantinian baggage, and I think we have a practice that we cannot 'endow with meanings appropriate to Anabaptist Mennonite theology.' We need a new ritual that defines what we want to say in 'blessing' or 'commissioning' a person for ministry in the church" (Oct. 24, 2003 email).

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Ordination and Pastoral Leadership: A Response to John E. Toews

Loren L. Johns

"This paper argues that ordination for ministry through the laying on of hands as practised in the church is without biblical foundation. There is no specific and clear textual basis for the theology and practice of 'setting aside' for full-time ministry, for giving special status, and for legitimating authority and power for church office. Furthermore, the practice serves to divide clergy from laity, to undermine the teaching of the NT that leaders must be servants, and to contradict the NT's repeated emphasis that all believers are called to and gifted for ministry. . . . The question of how the church selects and affirms its leaders must be based on more than specific texts whose meaning is ambiguous. It must ultimately be based on a theology of church." — John E. Toews

Toews's Argument Described and Considered[1]

In his article on ordination and pastoral leadership, John E. Toews identifies ordination as an odd and unbiblical practice. Tracing briefly the story of the Mennonite Brethren on this matter and his own story, which includes significant interest in and many years of service in support of pastoral leadership, Toews reviews the biblical evidence for ordination. Biblical evidence in support of our current practice of ordination is lacking – something that even strong advocates of pastoral ministry and ordination in the Mennonite Church freely admit,[2] though with different conclusions. While its practice in the Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant traditions may be understandable in light of their ecclesiologies, it clearly is not consistent with an Anabaptist or Mennonite ecclesiology.

The problem, says Toews, is that

> the act of ordination in many churches is viewed as a sacramental event – it confers lifetime grace, authority, and status. While many

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> Protestant churches, including Mennonite churches, have tried to de-sacramentalize ordination, the long-time underlying assumption and reality is sacramental. It continues to confer lifetime status, it is understood as 'a life-shaping and identity-giving moment' (*Mennonite Polity*, 30), it places one into a special 'office of ministry,' and it confers special privileges and status.[3]

Toews suggests that later ecclesiological interests in church order, hierarchy, and apostolic succession have schooled us to read some of the New Testament texts in anachronistic ways.[4] Thus, when we see references to "the laying on of hands" in the NT, we are tempted to think of some kind of ordination rite, even when the context makes clear that these passages (cf. 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6; Acts 8:17; 9:17; 19:6; Heb. 6:2) refer to the initiation and incorporation of people into the Christian church through the gift(s) of the Holy Spirit. The decision of the NRSV translators to substitute *ordain* for *lay hands on* in 1 Tim. 5:22 would be an example of translators going too far in their interpretation of the text as they translate – or at least of making the wrong interpretive decision in their translating.

Points of Critique

In commenting on the meaning of the laying on of hands in the NT, I think Toews goes too far in pressing the distinction between "initiation and incorporation of people into the Christian church" and "the imparting of spiritual gifts." He neatly categorizes all the above passages as examples of the former, and Acts 6:6 and 13:3 as examples of the latter. However, even when initiation and incorporation of new believers is clearly in view and not commissioning to some specialized ministry of leadership, the imparting of the gift(s) of the Holy Spirit are nevertheless present as well (see esp. Acts 8:17; 9:17; and 6:6). Furthermore, the laying on of hands is not just a symbolic "rite of initiation," but also an actual imparting of giftedness for ministry – ministry understood not as pastoral leadership but as the task of every Spirit-filled believer. Even if this is a "sacramental" view of the laying on of hands, I would agree with Toews that it certainly is not sacerdotal. Nevertheless, the biblical texts seem to indicate that the rite was more than symbolic; it was also effective.

Toews's biblical work may seem to reflect a restitutionist hermeneutic – the view that the church order of the earliest church is ideal and that later

developments in church order are by definition a fall from it. Restitutionists seek to define church order and structure by replicating a harmonized view of the church order(s) reflected in the NT.[5] But Toews recognizes that we do a lot today that the early church did not practice. We are not, and should not be, bound by biblical precedents in our conception of church order, for we recognize God's Spirit did not suddenly cease to function with the close of the NT canon.

If there is a "yawning gulf" between the early Paul and the Pastoral Epistles, or between the Pastorals and the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus over a century later, we should not assume that the later developments were necessarily a fall from the ideal. The developing structures and orders in the church may have been God's gift for new times, and it is just possible that Hippolytus reflects God's will for the contemporary church more than the Pastoral Epistles with respect to church offices. Toews's argument is not truly restitutionist in character. He recognizes that it is not enough to say that ordination is not specifically taught or practiced in the NT. His point is that its practice is not in keeping with the teaching or practices of the NT. Thus, it is not just a matter of New Testament silence on the issue; it is a matter of its essential incompatibility with NT teaching.

Although modern Anabaptists recognize that it is legitimate to make room for the authority of tradition and experience alongside the authority of Scripture in practical matters, it is difficult to know how and where to find the right balance. Historically, the church has suffered much corruption in taking too seriously the authority of later church tradition and too lightly the examples and teachings of the Bible. Toews would say that he is not rigidly idealizing the early, but recovering a biblical ecclesiology that is thoroughly grounded in biblical conceptions of the purposes and callings of God for it.

The question is whether Toews's call for our discontinuation of ordination responds flexibly and appropriately enough to the needs of the church in today's context. Answering such a question requires careful listening to the Holy Spirit as well as to church tradition and experience.

Assessment of the Argument by Means of Practical Considerations

So how should we interpret the Bible in light of the realities of our culture today? By focusing on what does and does not follow from Toews's reading of the Bible in terms of practical implications, I hope to clarify and test his

reading. On many of the issues he addresses, I believe Toews is on target – correct in the observations he makes and in the conclusions he draws for the life of the church. A consideration of several practical questions might help to test this assessment.

1. Does Toews really want us to do away with ordination? In challenging the very practice of ordination on the basis of its sacramental character in many traditions, is he not in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater?

Yes and no. Toews would say that we need some way to bless, commission, install, and publicly recognize the particular calling and role that a pastor has, but that we should modify its practice, our understandings of it, and our terminologies for it to bring it into line with the Bible and with Mennonite ecclesiology.

It is clear to me that in the NT, church leaders laid hands on others to commission or authorize them for specific ministries. In so doing, gifts of the Spirit were imparted, just as they were imparted to all believers for ministry. Toews does not challenge the validity of recognizing and authorizing individuals for pastoral ministry or other leadership roles in the church; what he is objecting to is primarily the elitist and classist implications that often accompany ordination.

How we have ordained and what we have made of it is admittedly problematic. However, since Toews does not challenge the idea that we need pastors or that they should be installed, blessed, and commissioned in some way, can we not work at investing new meanings and understandings into our rituals of installation/blessing and even in our use of the word *ordain*? Toews emphasizes the significant problems with doing so. He says that *ordain* has been so irretrievably sacerdotalized in its implications that we can no longer reinvest in it a more proper understanding of what the rite does or entails. The very words *ordain* and *ordination* carry with them notions of lifelong class, status, and a formal distinction between clergy and laity. These associations are not biblical and not in keeping with Anabaptist ecclesiology, he says. As a result, we need to learn to use other words like *bless* or *commission* in its place.

I used to agree with Toews on this point. However, several considerations have helped me change my mind. First, many ordinary

Mennonites would say that when we ordain, we are setting a person apart for a particular ministry – not in the sense of creating a class, status, or formal distinction between clergy and laity, but in the sense of recognizing and authorizing individuals for pastoral ministry or other leadership roles in the church. That is what we are doing in ordination. Second, many Mennonite churches have already made progress in creating new understandings of *ordain*. For instance, in most of the conferences I know, ordination is no longer for life but implies and entails accountability to the church. I am thus more optimistic than Toews about the possibility of changing our understandings of ordination in a more biblical direction while retaining our practice of it as well as the terminology of ordination.

I was ordained for pastoral ministry in 1978. When I left the pastorate in 1985 to become theology book editor for Herald Press, the conference of which I was a part thought there was some reason for retaining my ordination credentials for the ministry to the church that I was doing as book editor. Even so, I was required to periodically engage in conversations to ensure that I was being appropriately accountable to my local congregation as well as to the broader church in that ministry. I welcomed that accountability and respected the expectation. It helped establish an understanding of ordination credentials as conferring authority and leadership responsibilities, while at the same time undercutting elitism or personal status. Today, I serve as dean of AMBS; my ordination credentials are renewed annually for similar reasons.

If we can invest in the word *ordination* proper understandings in keeping with our ecclesiology as a Mennonite church – and that is one of the key questions here – then there is much to be gained in retaining the terminology. This is work that we can do – work that has already been done. I like John Esau's attempt to define *ordination* in ways that are appropriate to our ecclesiology:

> Ordination should be interpreted within the church to be about responsibility and accountability. It is a rite that belongs to the church by which the church lays claim upon those who would serve in ministerial leadership roles. It is intended to clarify relationships, roles, and responsibilities. Another way to say this is that the office of ministry belongs to the church, not to those to whom it is entrusted and symbolized through ordination.[6]

Ordination is thus not "about me" so much as it is about how my ministry is recognized by the larger ecclesiological movement of which I am a part. Dorothy Nickel Friesen defines it similarly: "Ordination is a churchly rite that connotes power, authority, and responsibility to the Body of Christ, to the call of God, and to the release of spiritual gifts possessed by the individual. This three-way combination needs and deserves a status that is unique and honorable."[7]

It is not as important for me as it once was to be ordained; the church has already commissioned me, authorized me, and installed me as academic dean, making my ordination credentials somewhat superfluous.[8] If I were to give up or lose these credentials, I do not think that this would weaken my standing in the church or my ability to operate effectively as a seminary dean. This is not the case for young pastors or for women or for others who more pressingly need the clear commissioning and authorizing of the church that ordination provides. My concerns about ordination do not derive from my own privileged status or power. It is not as though I have the luxury of being able to question the value of ordination, now that I no longer have the need for its authorization; I have long had deep convictions about the radical nature of the NT view of giftedness and ministry and have written about these matters in the 1980s. With or without ordination, leaders need the formal affirmation and authorization of the community. But such affirmation and authorization do not convey status, except insofar as *all* believers have special status, given their unique gifts and callings.

Finally, Toews does not adequately consider the ecumenical challenges that dispensing with ordination would entail. In most ecumenical contexts, ordination is synonymous with the church's authorization of an individual to play a representative and leadership role. Without ordination, pastors in the Anabaptist family of churches would need to try to explain again and again how and why it is that they are properly recognized and authorized as leaders in the church, and why it is that we nevertheless do not practice "ordination" but we do practice something like it. Eliminating ordination would cut us off from our shared understandings, even if we maintain important differences in our understanding of the word and of the rite. Critical theological self-differentiation is important, but certainly not for its own sake. As Diane Zaerr Brenneman asks, "Dare we be so different in the way we credential leaders

that post-modern Americans cannot figure out how to navigate our churches?"[9] John Esau is right to say that what we Anabaptists share with our brothers and sisters in other theological traditions – both in critique and in affirmation – is greater than what we differ on. Servanthood understandings, the priesthood of all believers, accountability, the call for a life consistent between profession and practice – all of these are common themes.[10] We must be careful about smug confidence about having a corner on the truth in these matters.

2. Does Toews wish to eliminate the clergy/laity distinction?
Absolutely! This essentially classist distinction owes itself historically to the influence of high church ecclesiologies that, in both their Constantinian and Magisterial Reformation forms, were highly invested politically in a disempowered laity. I fully agree with Toews that it is time for contemporary Mennonites in the Anabaptist tradition to repudiate such an unbiblical distinction. Classism does not empower the pastorate nor does it meet the needs of the church for effective leadership. The answer to this problem is not to disempower the pastorate as we did in the anti-authoritarian egalitarianism of the 1960s and '70s, but to place a respected and honored pastorate within the context of empowered congregations full of gifted and ministering believers. Active Spirit-empowered congregations are a gift to pastors.

Empowerment and disempowerment are both relative and subjective. Depending on one's perspective, the empowerment, recognition, or honoring of any person or persons in the church automatically entails the disempowerment, lack of recognition, or dishonoring of other persons in the church. I don't believe it. Surely we can do better! I like how Keith Harder has put this matter in response to my comments on ordination:

> In taking this step [i.e., in accepting ordination], I was keenly aware that the congregation would tend to see me primarily as a paid professional doing ministry on behalf of the church, which would tend to compromise and undermine my deeply held conviction that all are called to ministry and service. But I came to see that one of the best reasons for me to accept ordination is that it would actually help and empower me to equip and empower others for their ministries. It was not ultimately about the power that accrued to me in being ordained but it was much more about

> empowering others for their ministries that we might all embrace the task of building up the body of Christ and her witness to the world.
>
> As I reflected on my previous ministry experience and on other churches that had rejected ordination, it was not obvious to me that they were any more successful in calling and equipping everyone for ministry. The rejection of ordination too often was coupled with suspicion of leadership that seemed to compromise the ministry of all even more than the practice of ordination. The challenge for those who are ordained is to use their 'office' for what it is intended – to equip the saints for ministry. I have come to believe that ordination can actually contribute to that end, if the ordained are clear about this purpose and actively work to equip others for ministry.[11]

Power itself is not the problem. Certainly it is subject to misuse and abuse, but "we still need and value power, whether in persons who use it accountably or in institutions that use it for the common good."[12]

3. If Toews is correct in his assertion that our current understandings and practices of ordination are so unbiblical and out of sync with our ecclesiology, how did we get to where we are today?

This question deserves a fuller recital of history than I am able to provide, and the answers undoubtedly differ somewhat for each stream in our Anabaptist-Mennonite family. Toews referred to the "Concern Group," debates in the Dean's Seminar at AMBS, and the work of John Howard Yoder, all of which served to raise questions in the Mennonite Church tradition about ordination similar to those Toews raises. I suggest that in the last twenty years the church has ignored its misgivings about ordination for pragmatic reasons.

First, we wanted to honor pastors and the pastoral ministry, and so we have been reluctant to do anything that would undermine the class distinction to which ordination contributes. Second, the rite of ordination has been experienced as empowering by pastors. When they have had doubts or misgivings about their calling, its memory has served as a reminder that, yes, God and the church had indeed called them to this task. We did not want

pastors to second-guess their callings. We have other means at our disposal to confirm and reassure pastors in their callings besides resorting to classist structures. Third, the Mennonite Church has been busy courting and marrying a General Conference tradition that has not generally shared these misgivings. I am convinced that the old MC and GC traditions still have things to learn from each other on this score – not because the truth must be in between somewhere, but because their differing histories have taught differing lessons that are important and valid. Fourth, women have always needed to deal with an inferiority of class imposed both within and without the church in ways with which men have not needed to contend. As women have been received as pastors to greater or lesser extents, ordination has served to confer and confirm their class superiority along with ordained male pastors. Without ordination, women in ministry would face a continuing challenge of class and status that men in ministry simply would not need to face.

Our perceptions of what corrections are needed, and what we are thus prepared to argue for, are dependent to a great extent upon our particular experiences of life and the lacks we have experienced. Some of us are much more impressed with the dangers of authoritarianism and status than we are with the postmodern morass. For others, it is the opposite. As Andy Brubacher Kaethler has observed, “Some postmodern pastors are so inherently sceptical of institutionalized authority that the danger we face comes from the other direction of not taking it seriously enough. ‘Set apart’ does not necessarily mean ‘set above.’”[13] We need to pay attention to what the Spirit is saying to us, keeping our ears open especially to those with experiences different from ours. While pragmatic considerations are understandable, we must not be opportunistic in our consideration of the theological and practical issues here.

4. Won’t Toews’s proposed elimination of the clergy/laity distinction harm our efforts to develop and sustain a culture of call in today’s church?

No. It will actually support and enhance it. I lament when people ask whether God has “called them to the ministry.” It is a bad question and harmful to the church, since it wrongly implies that the answer could be no. The NT affirms that *every* believer is called to ministry for the sake of the church. As believers, we should not attempt to discern whether God is calling us to ministry; God is always calling all of us to ministry. The much better question is, To which

ministry is God calling me in this time and place? I am not suggesting that the Holy Spirit calls or gives gifts in only episodic ways; I believe that some callings and gifts have some durability and portability. I am suggesting only that the call to ministry requires the ongoing discernment and affirmation of the church. In perhaps more ways than Toews allows, the church is already functioning accordingly: we routinely evaluate the effectiveness of our pastors' ministries.

When I was in college, three other guys and I lived off-campus and led a weekly worship and Bible study for some of our peers at Goshen College. This went on for three years. Every week we provided leadership as the group got together, prayed, sang with guitars, studied the Bible, supported each other, and sought God's will. In the course of those three years, each of us began to sense a call to ministry. As it turned out, all four of us later served as pastors. Although none of us are currently pastors, I believe that each of us is continuing to fulfill our calls to ministry. Even as I was wrestling with that call in college, I believed that my call was to a ministerial leadership role in general, rather than to pastoral ministry specifically. (As it turned out, I have "ministered" as a pastor, theology book editor, college Bible professor, and seminary dean – and just as importantly in other, nonprofessional ways, such as a listening friend.) This made that call no less important to discern. I do believe that God calls some people specifically to pastoral ministry. But I also believe that the future of the church and of God's unfolding reign on earth depends much more on every believer hearing and responding to God's ongoing calls to ministry than it does on future pastors hearing the specific call to pastoral ministry.

The clergy/laity distinction actually makes it much more difficult for young people to consider the call to pastoral ministry, for a variety of reasons. First, some seminary students struggle with the discernment because they find it hard to believe that God is calling them to be like the pastors they have experienced. At AMBS we occasionally emphasize that God may be calling our students to serve as pastors even if they do not look or act like the pastors they have known – or want to do so. Congregations and pastorates are marvellously diverse in character; how much more are the gifts of the Spirit in empowering all of the members of the Body! Second, we are not used to affirming on a routine basis the responsibility of all believers to fulfill their calls to ministry in general. As we correct this – as we begin to expect,

experience, and benefit from the ministries of all believers, it will be much easier to affirm youth (and others) in their actual practice of various ministries. It will become much more natural for the church to recognize the gifts of leadership in a few, and it will be easier for the youth to imagine themselves in those ministries. Third, ministry experiences help one imagine pastoral ministry as a calling. That is what happened to me in college. There is a kind of natural progression from ministry to leadership in ministry to pastoral ministry. As youth grow in ministry experiences, it will be easier for them to imagine added leadership responsibilities in those experiences, and eventually the pastoral role.

5. Do pastors have a unique calling and a unique role to play in the church that deserves honor and respect?

Yes. Here I imagine Toews would say that the pastoral role is unique – just as every *other* role in the church is unique in its own way. The church needs leaders and the NT recognizes and affirms that need. However, Paul takes pains in 1 Cor. 12–14 to establish that all of the gifts and offices in the church are deserving of honor. "Our presentable parts need no special treatment" (1 Cor. 12:24, NIV). Even if Paul can identify some gifts as worthy of more honor than others ("God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers …" [1 Cor. 12:28]), no one can say that he or she does not need the less honorable gifts of the body. Those who are pastors or overseers *do* deserve honor, but so do all of the members of the body. What is most important is love (1 Cor. 12:31b–13:13) and whatever equips and builds up the Body of Christ (Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor. 14:1-5, 12, 26).

In my introduction to Erick Sawatzky's *The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective*, I asked a series of rhetorical questions:

> Is it possible to reform our understanding of ministry in such a way that recognizes the particular calling and giftedness of pastors while empowering the laity to exercise their own gifts as well? Can the church believe in and practice the priesthood of all believers without the anti-clericalism and disregard of the gifts of leadership and its authority that has often accompanied it? Is it possible to affirm and esteem the particular gifts and calling of

> the pastor in such a way that honors both the individual and the office *without* dishonoring or disempowering the members of the body?[14]

Although I cringe now that my uncritical use of the word *laity* implicitly recognizes the category, I believe that the answer to each of these questions is Yes! And I suspect Toews would agree.

6. Does Toews think that God calls people specifically to pastoral ministry today?

Toews would caution anyone about "calling" understood as an "inner sense" of calling. I am not as worried as Toews about that. While the external call provided by the discernment and confirmation of the church is important and supported biblically (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 14:29; Gal. 2:2b), biblical evidence in support of the inner call is just as strong and more pervasive. Even if our language about one's "sense of call" is inextricably linked with the heightened introspective consciousness of the West, many of the biblical call narratives include notes about the significant existential processing of those calls. I believe Toews would say that through the church God calls some individuals to pastoral roles for specific times and places.

The most fundamental and most important call is the one we know from the gospels: "Follow me." This is where it all starts. The fundamental commitment to serve God in response to God's marvellous grace outweighs in importance – and in its implications for the Reign of God – any specific calls to pastoral ministry. It is the task of believers to test and weigh prophetic words, and that includes calls. I believe that we weigh calls relatively well with regard to pastoral ministry, but not with regard to all the other forms of ministry in the church. When someone says, "I feel called to be a pastor," one of the tasks of the church is to weigh how much ego is mixed with the genuine call of God. I believe that the NT is remarkably consistent in insisting that all believers are called to ministry – that each has received a gift designed to build up the body through ministry to one another. Most of our congregations have a long way to go in honoring the Holy Spirit in this regard. We just don't think that way: we don't actively look in an ongoing way for how God is using others or us as vessels for the grace God wishes to show. We don't typically think about exercising our gifts as a matter of stewardship or potentially

withholding God's grace from someone if we don't exercise them (cf. 1 Peter 4:10).

7. Doesn't such a view of ministry and of the church's validation of ministry make questions of authority somewhat messy? Doesn't it imply that we will have to work hard at discerning the Spirit?
Yes.

Conclusion

I fully agree with Toews that "the question of how the church selects and affirms its leaders must be based on more than specific texts whose meaning is ambiguous. It must ultimately be based on a theology of church."

However, I would modify Toews's statement about the implications of the foregoing for ordination as follows: Ordination for ministry through the laying on of hands as practised in the church is a proper and legitimate extension of the biblical witness. There is a clear textual basis for the theology and practice of formally honoring, recognizing, and authorizing leaders for ministry in the community – and no compelling reason to avoid using the language of ordination in doing so. Such recognition can easily lend itself to an unbiblical dichotomizing of clergy and laity, to elitism, and to an improper exalting of the status of pastors, but it need not do so. An Anabaptist ecclesiology recognizes and honors the power and authority of pastors while also monitoring them and keeping them in check. The church urgently needs pastors who humbly but confidently embrace the authority conferred on them by God and by the church, but just as desperately does it need an active and empowered Body in which all believers contribute their gifts in service to Christ. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers have no higher calling than to equip the saints for their various works of ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

Notes

[1] The matters addressed in John E. Toews's article are very important and worth careful study and deliberation in the church. In considering the issues raised by Toews, I have benefited greatly from several rich conversations on ordination. Among those particularly helpful in these conversations have been John E. Toews himself; Diane Zaerr Brenneman; J. Nelson Kraybill; John Rempel; Dorothy Nickel Friesen; John Esau; my father, Galen Johns; Keith

Harder; Andrew Brubacher Kaethler; and Rebecca Slough. The thoughtful care and insightful responses they gave have prodded me both to sharpen my thinking and to change my mind about some things. If the published results of my thinking remain problematic, it is not their fault.

[2] For instance, John Esau has noted that the biblical literature on this subject was relatively early in the development of church tradition and in its need to address issues like church order and structures – too early, perhaps, to sense the need for structures of accountability. For various reasons, much of the church's thinking and listening to the Spirit on this matter post-dates the NT writings.

[3] Toews, "Rethinking the Meaning of Ordination," 5.

[4] See Toews, 10. For a similar argument about how contemporary ecclesiological and political interests may have influenced the King James translators' use of the word *ordain* in widely disparate contexts to translate more than a dozen different verbs in the NT, see my essay, "*Ordination* in the King James Version of the Bible," in *The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective*, ed. Erick Sawatzky (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House; and Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2004), 105–17. That essay lists the many Greek or Hebrew words that were translated *ordain* in the King James version, while giving some attention to the NIV and the NRSV. It also briefly explores potential theological, ecclesiological, and political reasons behind those translation decisions.

[5] Toews does not make the mistake Conrad Grebel did in his letter to Thomas Müntzer, when Grebel said, "Whatever we are not taught by clear passages or examples must be regarded as forbidden, just as if it were written: 'This do not!'" See Grebel's letter to Müntzer, in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, ed. G. H. Williams (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), 75.

[6] John Esau, personal e-mail February 14, 2004.

[7] Dorothy Nickel Friesen, personal e-mail February 15, 2004. My greatest misgiving here has to do with Dorothy's use of the word *status*. Although the church should honor pastors – and the pastorate – and recognize their ministry as unique, along with all the other unique gifts and callings, I believe attempts to establish or maintain the unique status of the pastor are potentially unbiblical and spiritually harmful for the church.

[8] I do not claim certain tax benefits available to ordained ministers serving in the United States, such as housing allowance. I am ambivalent about whether it is appropriate for pastors to do so. Although I feel better about not claiming those benefits, I am not ready to argue this should be the norm. I do claim "professional" expenses as any professional would.

[9] Diane Zaerr Brenneman, personal e-mail February 12, 2004.

[10] Esau, op. cit.

[11] Keith Harder, personal e-mail February 11, 2004.

[12] Esau, op. cit.

[13] Andrew Brubacher Kaethler, personal e-mail February 13, 2004.

[14] "Introduction," in Sawatzky, *Heart of the Matter*, 13. I recognize here with appreciation the caution offered by Keith Harder that the phrase "priesthood of all believers" should not be taken as an attempt to eliminate priests from our midst, but rather to help us understand that we all are priests.

External Growth Factors: Mennonite Churches in Winnipeg

Leo Driedger

Before World War II most Mennonites in North America were agricultural farmers, but after the war a large migration occurred, and by 1990 over half the Mennonites in North America lived in the city. In Winnipeg, however, six Mennonite churches were already established by 1940.[1] Why did Mennonites move to the city so much earlier in Manitoba, and why did their churches continue to grow?

Factors in Church Development

The great commission proclaimed by Jesus, to "go into all the world and make disciples," implies that believers will have a strong urge to spread their message; many will believe, follow, and join the movement. Individuals and the groups they form will generate "internal" and "external" drives to spread the "good news," and this will result in natural additions and growth. New terms like "missional" seem to imply that these drives to proclaim, share, and demonstrate new life will invite and attract others to join a cause. On the other hand, missions, immigration, migrations, church planting, development of institutions, cultural factors, and conference affiliation are external factors also influencing growth or decline. Growth implies positive dynamics of life, energy, strength, and hope in a future, all of which are valued.

Lyle Schaller's work as a church growth consultant[2] has looked at the gains and losses of membership turnover, including new confessions of faith and transfers in, versus deaths, transfers out, dropouts, and the relative effects of these factors. Schaller assesses factors such as active and inactive members, church size, group activity, leadership, youth ministries, and education to get some sense of what changes are occurring. Such intense study soon reveals the complexity and diversity of the factors involved. Here we shall focus on Mennonite church and membership growth in Winnipeg, and sort external factors fostering such growth.

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External Church Growth Factors

External factors influencing church growth are, we assume, specific to local regions and hard to standardize. These factors vary economically, politically, socially, environmentally, and geographically. We examine them in Winnipeg, which has the largest urban concentration of Mennonites in the world and where there are now fifty Mennonite churches. At least seven external factors must be examined: 1) missions, 2) immigration, 3) rural-urban migration, 4) church planting, 5) church institutions, 6) class/cultural backgrounds, and 7) church conferences. See Table 1.

Table 1 External and Internal Church Growth Factors

External Factors	Internal Factors
Missions	Empowering Leadership
Immigration	Gift-Oriented Ministry
Rural-Urban Migrations	Loving Relationships
Church Planting	Passionate Spirituality
Development of Institutions	Functional Structures
Class and Cultural Factors	Inspiring Worship
Church Conferences	Holistic Small Groups
	Need-Based Evangelism

Source: Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 1996: 6-46.

Missions Since most Mennonites before World War II farmed in rural areas, they usually began work in the city by sending someone to do mission work. Individuals concerned with outreach were sent by congregations or a Mennonite conference to share the gospel. Often this was done by a few Mennonites who began Bible study with non-Mennonites in small informal groups, which sometimes became struggling churches. This was so in Winnipeg, when in 1907 German Mennonite immigrants began Bible study in the North End with German Lutherans.

Immigration Immigration saw major waves of inflows into Manitoba in the 1870s, 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s. When Mennonites emigrated from Ukraine in the 1870s (the "1870s Mennonites" as they will be called in this

paper), the more progressive ones moved to the U.S. prairie states and the more conservative ones came to Manitoba. Manitoba Mennonites established rural village life on two reserves (the East Reserve, east of the Red River; and the West Reserve, west of the Red River) and remained conservative culturally, theologically, and geographically. Mennonites who came from Ukraine in the 1920s had modernized technologically, educationally, and culturally, and while some moved to the farms, some stayed in towns and cities, including Winnipeg. Mennonite immigrants who came in the 1950s, who had remained and lived through the communist regime and who were largely uprooted from their rural villages in Ukraine, were scattered in the Soviet Union, and came to the prairies with a diversity of experiences. Many also came in the 1970s from Europe and South America, with another variety of experiences. Mennonites who now live in Winnipeg have emigrated to Canada at different times, have had different cultural experiences, and congregate in a variety of new churches.

Rural-Urban Migrations Mennonites who came to Manitoba in the 1870s settled on the two rural reserves, established scores of villages, and had limited contact with others for many generations. During World War II many Mennonites were forced to serve in alternative service assignments, some in the military. They had seen a larger world, and they began coming to Winnipeg to find work, study, and do business. Thus, a huge rural-urban migration occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, and many new Mennonite churches were started. Church growth and expansion were greatly influenced by this rural-urban migration.

Church Planting The half-dozen Mennonite churches already existing in Winnipeg were inundated by the 1950s influx from the farm and by refugees from Europe. Some churches grew very fast and became very large, some recruiting over 1,000 members in a short time, like First Mennonite Church. Other congregations, like Bethel Mennonite, decided on numerous occasions during the 1950s - 1970s to plant new churches in different parts of the city, releasing some members for that planting. These two strategies brought different results. The First Mennonite strategy, which continued to welcome new members in one place, resulted in a large membership of up to 1,400 - 1,500, so that individual churches needed more space and larger buildings. The Bethel Mennonite strategy kept church membership down to

500 - 700, by planting new "daughter" churches which it helped support. Both strategies resulted in enormous growth, but one plan resulted in a huge congregation, the other in a half-dozen new smaller churches.

Church Institutions Raymond Breton suggests that it is important for minority groups to build some of their own institutions in order to survive.[3] He says that the more institutionally complete such a group is, the better it will maintain its identity. The two national colleges of the two largest groups of Mennonites in Canada, Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) and Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), were established in Winnipeg in 1944 and 1947 respectively, and when the war was over, their presence legitimized higher Mennonite education in the city. Here students preparing for leadership in their constituencies could learn Anabaptist history and theology. (Recently CMBC, Concord, and Menno Simons colleges have formed Canadian Mennonite University.) Mennonite youth came from across Canada to study in Winnipeg, providing additional momentum for urban church growth there. This factor influenced growth in some churches especially related to the colleges, and it spawned additional high schools, elementary schools, church offices, and businesses, all magnets boosting membership.

Class and Cultural Factors While immigration and migration are input factors, social class and cultural factors have to do with social comfort and spatial residence. We would expect new immigrants from other countries to be less well off, and therefore likely to settle in the older, cheaper parts of the city in order to find affordable housing. Mennonite mission work began in such an area: an older, blue-collar North End part of the city, in 1907. Immigrants of the 1920s settled in the older West End, perpetuating blue-collar, lower socio-economic styles of life. Many immigrant young women of this period worked for the elite as housekeepers. Gibson Winter suggests in *Suburban Captivity of the Churches* that as blue-collar immigrants become more upwardly mobile because of hard work and thrift, they move into newer, more affluent suburbs and take their churches with them.[4] This shift also involves changes in social and cultural life styles. Such a shift happened to Winnipeg Mennonites, and it affected long-term church growth in different parts of the city.

Church Conferences Ever since Anabaptists began 500 years ago in Europe, Mennonites have been diverse. Different conferences do not communicate very much because of their strong congregational politics. Thus,

Mennonites in Manitoba and Canada have historically developed many cultural expressions in different contexts and have followed many conference divisions. The two largest groups, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (abbreviated as CMC in this paper, but now called MC-Canada) and the Mennonite Brethren (MB), split into two groups in 1860 in Ukraine and have continued on separate denominational tracks here. Many smaller groups have also begun along separate conference lines. Thus, churches, schools, and other institutions have to this day adhered tenaciously to these lines, although there is evidence of some changes recently. This factionalism has continued in Manitoba and is a factor influencing church growth trends in Winnipeg as well.

We suggest that these seven *external* factors greatly influence church growth, and we will examine evidence of their influence in Winnipeg. To create more context, however, we need to add eight *internal* growth factors, listed in Table 1, which are also important context but cannot be examined at length here.

Internal Church Development Factors

Christian Schwarz and his Institute for Church Development conducted thorough scientific studies of church development between 1994 and 1996, taking 1,000 churches in 32 countries.[5] They developed eight growth factors: 1) empowering leadership, 2) gift-oriented ministry, 3) loving relationships, 4) passionate spirituality, 5) functional structures, 6) inspiring worship, 7) holistic small groups, and 8) need-based evangelism. These factors are strongly related to "natural internal church development" that will inspire existing members and attract new ones. Researchers found that effective leaders, who can work with a team of gifted members in a loving relationship, are important. Passionate spiritual commitments inspired by creative worship, and small groups where members can communicate and organize themselves, are also crucial. Schwarz and associates found that growing churches displayed more of these eight characteristics than declining churches. Churches scoring high on all eight inevitably grew in membership.[6] While most growing churches could not score positively on all eight, those which did were sure to grow. The question therefore became not how to attract more people to worship, but how churches can grow in each of the eight areas so as to become more attractive to outsiders. Researchers also found that when size increases, the growth rate rapidly decreases, presumably because leadership, effective small

groups, and involvement of all members becomes increasingly more difficult.

Ronald Waters compiled a set of readings titled “An Anabaptist Look at Natural Church Development” by editing the contributions of six writers who presented papers at an Anabaptist Evangelism Council conference in 1999.[7] Mennonites studied Schwarz’s “Natural Church Development” plan to see whether Mennonites should make use of the research. The Franconia and Virginia conferences are using the Schwarz plan, as are the Mennonite Brethren in Canada.[8] Debra Dyck reports that about 25 percent of Canadian MB churches have sent in congregational questionnaires using the Schwarz methods and are doing research in their individual congregations.[9] Further, five CMC leaders recently attended a Natural Church Development training seminar in Saskatoon to consider using Schwarz’s plan.[10]

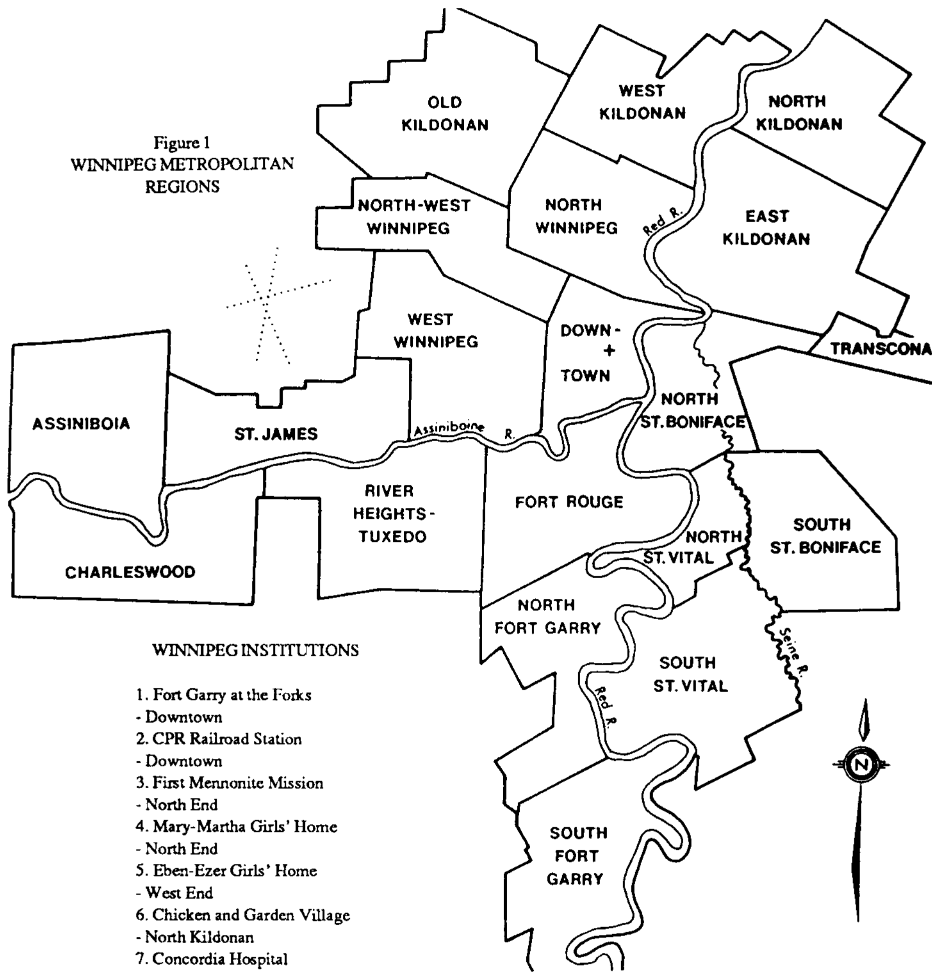
Here we cannot examine these internal growth factors, because as yet, some Winnipeg churches are only beginning to study them. And in a short paper we have more than enough variables to deal with, in focusing on the seven external growth factors to which we turn now. We will look first at missions, immigration, rural migration, and institutional extensions.[11]

Early Beginnings: Pre-1950s

Missions in the North End

As early as 1907, German immigrants were having Bible studies in the North End of the city (see Figure 1). They had come from Russia, had heard of Mennonite Brethren “pietists,” and sent a call to Mennonite Brethren in Winkler, Manitoba to “come and help them.” Johann Warkentin and Peter Neufeld responded, bought a small chapel in St. Vital, and moved it to the corner of Burrows and Andrews, and they began to meet together in the northwestern part of the city.[12] In 1913 Wilhelm Bestvater became the first pastor of a membership of mostly German Lutheran background. A high musical standard was set by the Horch family, which later led to the well-known ministry of music by Ben and Esther Horch. When the small chapel filled, members moved farther north in 1929 to 621 College Avenue. So services among German Lutherans in the North End represented the earliest beginnings of Mennonite church growth in the city.[13] Missions, as an external growth factor, was operating.

Figure 1. Municipalities of Winnipeg



WINNIPEG INSTITUTIONS

1. Fort Garry at the Forks - Downtown
2. CPR Railroad Station - Downtown
3. First Mennonite Mission - North End
4. Mary-Martha Girls' Home - North End
5. Eben-Ezer Girls' Home - West End
6. Chicken and Garden Village - North Kildonan
7. Concordia Hospital - East Kildonan
8. Elmwood MB Institutions - Elmwood
9. MB Bible College - Elmwood
10. MB Collegiate Institute - Elmwood
11. CM Bible College - Tuxedo
12. Westgate Mennonite Collegiate - Downtown
13. Mennonite Elementary School - St. James
14. University of Winnipeg - Downtown
15. University of Manitoba - Fort Garry
16. Mennonite Central Committee - Fort Garry
17. Mennonite Mediation Services - Downtown

Coming of Immigrants from Ukraine

Immigration was also a factor. As early as 1917 Benjamin Ewert began visiting Mennonites in Winnipeg for the Mission Committee of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC).[14] In 1921 the Ewerts moved to Winnipeg and started meeting with Mennonites in Zion Reformed Church on Alexander and Ellen in the West End (West Winnipeg, Figure 1). Mennonite immigrants from Ukraine arrived and became a dominant group in Ewert's small congregation. This group became First Mennonite Church, the city's largest "immigrant" Mennonite church. With the coming of these Mennonites, services were conducted increasingly in German, and more institutional ways of church work were emphasized, so that the original mission work changed considerably. Work with immigrants became a major factor in the growth of a Mennonite presence. Reverend John Enns, a teacher who was bishop of First Mennonite Church for years, was a 1920s immigrant from Ukraine himself, and he and his wife opened the ministry to young Mennonite women who worked as maids for elite households in the city. Enns and his wife were the houseparents of a Maedchenheim, or "Girls Home," in the West End, where young women came on weekends for support and spiritual services.[15]

While Mennonite immigrants were gathering in the North and West End, they also began meeting in the Kildonans in the northwest during the 1920s. The MBs and CMCs began meeting in the same church in 1928. By 1935 the two groups started their separate churches: MB North Kildonan and North Kildonan Mennonite. North Kildonan, on the east side of the Red River and not yet a part of Winnipeg, saw Mennonites start small farms, raising chickens, hogs, and garden produce which many peddled in the city. Most of these farmers were new immigrants who arrived in the 1920s. Their entrepreneurial pursuits led to factories, printing, lumber sales, building construction, and other businesses. These efforts have since expanded and Mennonites have entered all facets of commerce. North Kildonan has since become a northeast suburb of the city. By 1936 some North End MBs crossed the railroad and began a church further south, in the center of the city, called South End MB Church.

Rural-Urban Migrants

Bethel Mennonite Church is the best example of church growth through rural-urban migration of 1870s Mennonites from the rural reserves. By 1937, Benjamin Ewert had started Bethel Church, located on Furby Avenue, gathering

rural migrants who did not feel culturally comfortable in First Mennonite Church because of its emphasis on the high German language.[16] Services were held mostly in English at Bethel, especially for younger people who had not learned German well. Bethel has since planted a half-dozen churches more open to English culture. These churches, which mushroomed in the 1960s, are examined in our discussion of CMC church growth.

Institutional Extensions

In 1923, while Mennonites were meeting in the North End, the West End, and the Kildonans, editors of *Die Mennonitische Rundschau*, which had been published in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, transferred the German language newspaper to Winnipeg, where they hoped to find more German immigrant readers.[17] This weekly paper became an important means of communication among recent immigrants, and it began an institutional presence in Winnipeg, first locating in the West End and then moving to Henderson Highway in North Kildonan, where it is published today. The fifth external factor – institutional support – became an additional growth factor.

Concordia Hospital, located in northeast Winnipeg, was also begun in the latter 1920s to minister to Mennonite health needs. By 1944, Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) was established in Elmwood in the northeastern Kildonan area (close to Mennonite Christian Press on Henderson), offering for the first time higher education for Mennonites in Canada. By 1947, Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) was also begun, in Bethel Church. Establishment of these national colleges sounded the call for higher education to the two largest Mennonite denominations in Canada and beckoned Mennonites to study in the city and not just at its two universities. Mennonite institutions, including businesses, have since expanded enormously in Winnipeg, and have tended to act as a magnet, drawing rural Mennonites to shop, study, and find jobs as transportation became more affordable.

The seven external church growth factors were all operating in the pre-1950s Mennonite church beginnings. Three of the first churches were MB, and three were CMC. It all began as mission work, followed by the arrival of Mennonite immigrants. In the 1920s Mennonite immigrants turned North End MB Church (now Elmwood MB) from a struggling mission to a German immigrant church. This was also true for First Mennonite Church, which changed from a small struggling rural-urban migrant church to a 1920s

German immigrant congregation. *Die Mennonitische Rundshau* provided German news for these immigrants. The two colleges drew rural Mennonites and boosted growth, especially in North End MB and Bethel Mennonite Churches. South End MB (later Central MB) Church was a branch of North End MB Church. Church planting had begun. The movement of North End MB church to College Avenue and then to Henderson Highway as Elmwood MB, clearly illustrates Gibson Winter's notion of class and cultural factors as major influences.

Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church Growth

To trace the membership growth of Winnipeg churches, Bruno Dyck and associates visited all the churches, examined records, and talked to leaders to get their membership figures for 1948 - 1992. We present these figures by denomination, so that readers can compare the growth patterns of each church. Since the Mennonite Brethren began first, we start with them.

Early Pre-1950 Missions and Immigration

Figure 2 plots the membership of the three North End, North Kildonan, and South End Churches. By 1948, all three had grown to over 200 members, but none had over 300. While the North End Church began as a mission, it and North Kildonan Church had grown largely because of immigrants from Ukraine in the 1920s. South End Church was a daughter extension of North End Church, but it too was heavily influenced by immigration and received a boost when more immigrants came in the 1950s. All three of these first churches continued to grow until the early 1960s, with a steep incline, more than doubling in 20 years to roughly 500 - 600 members. This extensive growth was again due to a second influx of immigrants after World War II. All three churches tended to level off after the early 1960s.

New Churches of the Fifties and Sixties

As seen in Figure 2, the earliest three MB churches did not grow as fast after 1960, largely because of new church planting – the fourth external factor. North Kildonan MB membership declined after 1961 because some members left to start River East MB. North Kildonan again grew quite steeply until

Figure 2. Membership Growth of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Winnipeg, 1950-1992

1975 to over 700 members, but dropped to under 500 when about 250 started McIvor MB Church in the same area. South End MB Church in 1961 decided to relocate to Portage Avenue, and had a drop in its ranks because 134 members chose to stay in the old building at Central MB Church. Portage Avenue MB grew after that but not as sharply, and declined somewhat after 1985, because many other new churches were started in the 1980s. North End (Elmwood) reached a membership high of over 600 in 1965 but declined to half as many by 1992.

The class and cultural factor seems to be operating with the planting of the suburban Fort Garry MB Church, while a few members remained behind in the original inner city Salem MB Church. It clearly illustrates Winter's "suburban captivity" thesis. In 1956 the Gospel Light Mission at Logan snd Ellen was started in the inner city by John Schmidt and MBBC students. Others from South End MB Church (Portage Avenue MB) joined the mission people, and they all moved to a vacant church on McMillan and Arbuthnot in 1959. In 1963 they moved to the suburbs to build Fort Garry MB Church at 1771 Pembina Highway, close to the University of Manitoba, where they wanted to minister to Mennonite students. It was the first MB church in southwestern Fort Garry, the southern part of Winnipeg. From the beginning, services were in English, and many young people attended. Membership grew very steadily, beginning with 47 in 1957 and growing to 353 by 1992. A few members were lost in the 1960s when two other MB churches were planted.

In 1961 the majority of South End MB (Central MB) members began an English church, Portage Avenue MB Church, in a large new building. After World War II many Mennonite Brethren had become stranded in Europe, and some of them came to South End, doubling its size. Membership comprised two large groups, one that had recently come from Europe and wanted to retain German services, and the original group that was more comfortable with Canadian culture and wanted more English services, which their youth preferred. This more acculturated group of 429 members moved to Portage Avenue MB in the West End. Figure 2 shows that the group grew rapidly to 490 members by 1966. Then they leveled off for a few years, with some members leaving to start new churches.[18]

Salem MB Church began as the Gospel Light Mission in the inner city. When a large group left to begin the Fort Rouge and then the Fort Garry MB Church, the building remained empty until a small group of MBBC students,

leaders of the Gospel Light Mission, and others began meeting there again. In 1964 this group became Salem MB Church. It has seen a high turnover in members, and attendance is always higher than actual membership. Membership fluctuated from a high of 71 in 1972 to a low of 35 in 1984-86, with 42 members in 1992.

In 1964 twelve charter members from South End MB Church started Brooklands Community Church in the city's western part – another suburban move. It was a young group who wanted to reach out to others that began Sunday and Vacation Bible schools by canvassing in the community. They built a church in 1965 after meeting in schools earlier, and membership rose from 31 in 1965 to 116 in 1990. In the late 1980s new members joined from Maples MB Church, boosting their roll.

New Churches Since the Late 1970s

The big spurt of new MB church planting in the 1960s led to a lull of more than a decade, until more churches were started in the late 1970s. In 1974 North Kildonan MB Church was bursting at the seams with 737 members when it decided to start a new church. In 1976, 248 members began McIvor MB Church in North Kildonan. It was a young, educated, middle-class church which had moved further into the newer northeastern suburbs. When members left, it was difficult for the mother church because a whole young generation of leaders had moved out. A new style of leadership and services began, new additions were built in the 1980s, and new members joined, so that by 1992 the new church had grown to 514 members in just seventeen years. Growth seemed to be endless, without any decline whatsoever. The sixth factor of Winter's suburban captivity thesis spawned cultural changes, upward social class mobility, and geographical relocation.

Westwood Community Church, another example of expansion to the suburbs, was planted by Portage Avenue MB Church in 1979. Services were first held in Bedson School, beginning with 59 charter members, who later erected their own church on 401 Westwood Drive in western Winnipeg. Membership grew steadily from 59 in 1979 to 208 in 1992. It is a fairly mixed age group, and community outreach is significant.

In 1982 Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the Mennonite Brethren, and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada began work with Asians in the city, holding services in Vietnamese and Chinese. In 1986 the

Vietnamese and Chinese split, the Vietnamese joining the CMCs, the Chinese joining the MBs. In 1987 there were 40 members in the Chinese MB Church, but by 1992 only 35. They first met in homes and moved around a lot.

In 1984, 25 people mostly from River East MB began a church in Valley Gardens Junior High School, under the leadership of four couples designated by the River East congregation. They called a pastor in 1985 and continue to worship. By 1989 membership in Valley Gardens Community Church rose to 69, and in 1992 stood at 65. It is the third MB church to use "Community" in its name, not "Mennonite Brethren." In 1995 Valley Gardens Church moved to 365 Edelweiss, to merge with Northdale CMC Church. There were 75 members in 1995, 109 in 2000. It is an example of denominational cooperation.

In 1990 Eastview Community Church split from River East MB Church. Members were conservative theologically and interested in more expansion, taking the Boys and Girls Clubs and the Morning Out for Mothers programs with them. There had been differences in opinion as to how the church should be run, so 152 members left in 1990, about half the roll. The new church grew to 164 members in 1992. This seems to be a "counter cultural" move.

A self-started group of about nine or ten MBs, who had a desire for a more contemporary worship service and were disillusioned with their own congregations, began meeting in 1990 as The Meeting Place in the heart of Winnipeg. They wanted to reach out to non-Christians. They started in a partially finished office building, then moved to 139 Smith Street. The membership of 34 grew to 50 in 1990 and 117 by 1994. Since then they have grown enormously, with 271 members in 2004 and an average attendance of 1,300. Christian Schwarz's natural church development study is needed to see to what extent internal factors are operating here.

Some MB churches are struggling to survive. St. Boniface Evangelical Christian Church held its first service in 1982. The group shared a building with the Spanish Christian Church on 231 Kitson but dissolved in the mid-1990s. St. Vital MB Church held its first service in 1987, beginning with some 20 founding members, many coming from Fort Garry MB Church. The purpose of starting these churches was to reach people in predominantly Catholic areas of the city.

Three MB churches were started and have closed. Maples MB Church began with 13 charter members in 1980, partially supported by the Manitoba MB Conference. Membership in 1981 was 25; in 1989, 19; by 1990 it had

closed. Cornerstone Christian Fellowship opened in 1977 as an inner city resource centre for counseling, in the hope that a congregation would develop. There were 28 members in 1984, then 38, dropping to 30 by 1990. It closed in 1991. Transcona Community Church began in 1983, under the combined efforts of McIvor, River East, Elmwood, and North Kildonan Churches. There were 51 members in 1984, 41 in 1986, and only 21 in 1991. It closed in 1992.

This examination of the membership growth of 18 MB churches since 1907 reveals that many have flourished and are still going strong, while some have struggled and a few have closed. Many external growth factors were operating, especially immigration and church planting.

Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC)

Pre-1950 Immigration and Rural-Urban Migration

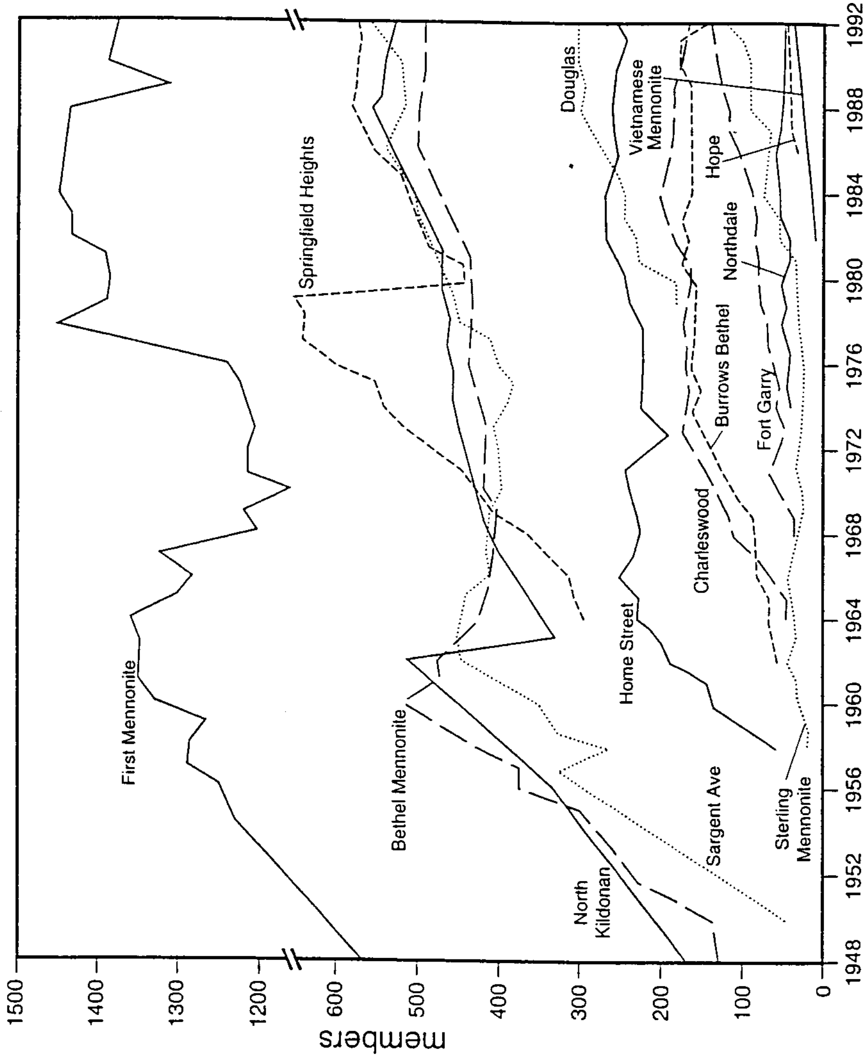
Schoenwieser Mennonite Church (First Mennonite), which the CMC started in 1926, grew to over 400 members by 1948, due largely to immigrants from Ukraine in the 1920s (see Figure 3). Steep growth continued until 1964 because of postwar immigrants. By 1964 First Mennonite Church had become the city's largest Mennonite congregation – 1,350 members – and had voted several times on planting new churches but always decided against it. Membership declined for a decade when several new churches began and some First Mennonite members left.[19]

Immigration was also a major growth factor for North Kildonan Mennonite Church, but its steep incline was due largely to postwar immigrants and others who came as migrants from rural Manitoba.[20] Almost 200 members were lost in 1962, when the Springfield Heights congregation began in the same area. Growth after that continued, but not as sharply, as rural-urban migration continued.

A third immigrant church began in 1950 as Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, composed mostly of newcomers from Europe. Sargent grew very fast until 1962, after which membership leveled off because a number of new churches began, some of which were started by members.

Bethel Mennonite Church, which began in 1937, grew because of rural-urban migration from rural Manitoba rather than immigration.[21] Bethel held English services from the beginning, and grew to over 500 members in less

Figure 3. Membership Growth of Conference of Mennonites in Canada Churches in Winnipeg, 1950-1992



than 25 years. It has not grown larger than 550 members because of a major commitment to planting other churches. If the Bethel congregation had decided to stay together like First Mennonite Church did, it too would be over 1,000 members, if you add members of Bethel and its daughter churches.

Church Planting and Rural-Urban Migration, 1950-1969

As with the MBs, seven CMC churches were begun in the 1950-1969 period. While Sargent Avenue Church was an immigrant church, the other six started after 1957 because of rural-urban migration of 1870s Mennonites, with the exception of Springfield Heights Church.[22] None of the five migrant churches had grown over 300 members by 1992.

In 1957 about 55 persons gathered to worship as Bergthaler Mennonite Church in the vacated MB church in North Kildonan. Members moved three more times to the West End before buying a United Church in 1973, after which they changed their name to Home Street Mennonite Church. In 1960 there were 136 members, growing to 246 in 1966. That year a group left to start Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship. Home Street membership remained between 200 and 250 for a dozen years, when many new CMC churches were started in the sixties and seventies. It reached a high of 277 members in 1983 and remained in that range, with 260 in 1992.

Interest in Mennonites meeting in St. Vital began in the 1940s, and by 1948 this had led to teaching Sunday school in homes. In 1951 the congregation moved into a community hall, and by 1953 began meeting in the basement of a new structure they built at 18 Sterling Avenue. Those who met were of conservative Bergthaler, Sommerfelder, and Rudnerweide (Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church) heritage, with each group fairly evenly represented. By 1955 the EMMCs separated to begin their own church because they disagreed about which mission boards to support. A sanctuary was built in 1956 by Sterling members on top of the basement. They began a formal church in 1958, when 18 people became charter members of a CMC church. They moved several more times until locating in a new building at 1008 Dakota in 1981. Membership grew very slowly to 31 in 1970, 46 in 1980, 86 in 1990, and 107 in 1992.

Burrows Bethel Church began when some members of Bethel Church started worshiping together. They dedicated a building at 384 Talbot Avenue

in Elmwood in 1961, the first English Mennonite church in the Kildonans on the northeast side of the Red River. It was called Elmwood Bethel Mennonite Church, and reported 66 members in 1962. Because of overcrowding, members purchased the St. Giles United Church at Burrows and Charles in the North End in 1973 and moved to the west side of the river. The original membership of 156 hardly grew, reaching a high of 174 in 1991 and declining to 152 in 1992. The church has closed since then because it is in an older area of the city, few Mennonites live in that area, and "Mennonite" was deleted from their new name. It was a church of young members, mostly under 40, many having attended Briercrest or Winnipeg Bible College (Providence College), with a strong evangelical and missionary emphasis.

Charleswood Mennonite Church was also planted largely by Bethel Mennonite Church members, because there were no Mennonite (CMC) churches in the city's western and southern area. Seven couples from Bethel and five couples from Sargent Avenue founded the church, with 37 charter members in 1963, meeting in Chapman School. An educational wing was built at 699 Haney in 1965, when there were 65 members. By 1973 there were 176 members; in 1984, 198. Membership declined to 160 in 1992, when some left due to controversial leadership. A change in leadership resulted in a rise to 270 members in 2002. Charleswood gained an addition for the third time in 2003. For years it was a very young church, engaged in experimental worship, involving leadership teams where at least six co-pastors were women over a period of 35 years.

In 1966 Winnipeg Bergthaler Church became overcrowded and a group in Fort Garry, where there were no CMC churches, began meeting at Nazarene College in 1967, gathered from the Bergthaler, Bethel, and Sterling Avenue Churches, which represented mostly 1870s Mennonites. They built a new church at 150 Bayridge in 1985. They began with 34 members, a number which grew slowly to 92 when they moved into a newly-built church in 1985, and to 142 members in 1992. They have no salaried staff; four lay ministers, including women, organize the work and lead the preaching and services.

What is striking is that none of the five rural-urban migration churches grew to more than 300 members in over 30 years, perhaps because they either had scattered into so many little congregations or were culturally conservative and could not attract more members. Churches where immigrants

were dominant often grew much faster and larger. Springfield Heights Mennonite Church is another example of the importance of the immigrant factor. It began in 1964, when 156 members of North Kildonan Church and 34 from Sargent Avenue started a new congregation in Springfield Heights School, including many who had come from South America (over half from Paraguay). They built a new church in 1965. Membership grew steadily to 656 in 1979, until more than 200 left to found Douglas Mennonite Church. Since many of these 200 were younger and potential leaders, membership grew more slowly to a high of 575 but did not regain the former level. In 1992 there were 552 members.

CMC Extension After the Seventies

Northdale Mennonite Fellowship began when Springfield Heights Church got quite full in the early 1970s and some members needed English services (Springfield Heights services were all in German). A group of married couples with children began to meet at River East High School and started as a church in 1975 with a charter membership of 43, another example of church planting. Membership grew to a high of 56 in 1985 but dropped to 45 in 1992. Members built a new church in 1978 at 365 Edelweiss, but found difficulty in keeping the building going with so few supporters. However, Valley Gardens Community Church (MB), which had 65 members by 1992, did not have a church facility, so they merged with the Northdale in 1994 and now worship as a joint Jubilee Mennonite Church in the Northdale building, with 75 members in 1995 and 109 in 2000. This is one of the few instances where the Mennonite conference factor was ignored, as was also true of the early beginnings of MB and CMC churches in North Kildonan.

Douglas Mennonite Church became an independent congregation in 1980 after a period of joint work with the parent Springfield Heights Church. In 1979, 185 members, mostly from Springfield Heights, transferred to a property they had purchased in 1977, located at 1517 Rothesay in North Kildonan. In the 1990s they were planning to build more education and fellowship space. There was steady membership growth to 300 in 1992. Church planting is evident here.

The Vietnamese Mennonite Church is located at 183 Euclid in the Point Douglas area near Main Street, north of the CPR tracks. As we saw earlier, a joint effort in 1982 by MCC Canada, the CMCs, and the MBs

gathered recent immigrants to worship in Vietnamese and Chinese. In 1986 the two language groups separated, the Chinese sponsored by the MBs, the Vietnamese by the CMCs. They first met in homes and then worshiped in various churches, including Home Street, Central MB, Calvary Temple, and Sargent Mennonite. Finally they bought a lot with two houses on 183 Euclid, where in 1992 forty members and 35 children worshiped. Joint MB and CMC church planting began here.

In 1986 Bethel Mennonite Church commissioned seven persons to plan for a new church. In 1987 they first worshipped in the Wolesley area, in Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, with 47 founding members who began Hope Mennonite Church. This group was young, under 40 years of age, many had jobs in the social services, and half of them came from Bethel Church. They soon decided to move to Crossways, part of Young United Church Services at Broadway and Sherbrook downtown, where they also wanted to serve the community. Membership had grown to only 53 members by 1992.

The Good News Fellowship began in 1993, when 80 members and 20 children split from Home Street Mennonite Church. They bought their first building from the Presbyterians, at 2764 Ness in St. James in western Winnipeg. They left Home Street because they opposed liberal biblical interpretation, felt there was a lack of trust among members, opposed some conference policies, and were dissatisfied with inconsistent decision-making. They wanted more gospel songs. It was a church split, which used to be common in rural churches but has been less so in the city.

Comparing the MB and CMC conferences, we found that they mostly developed their own churches, with a few exceptions. Immigration was a dominant factor in church growth, especially in the earlier years. Rural-urban migration was an even stronger growth factor for half the CMC congregations. Church planting was important in about half of the churches. Church growth was enhanced by the two MB and GC national colleges located in Winnipeg. There is also evidence of the influence of social class and culture, where some churches reflect Gibson Winter's thesis about movement from inner city to suburbs.

Rural Mennonites Who Came Later

The two conferences, Mennonite Brethren and Conference of Mennonites in Canada, are the largest conferences in Canada, in Manitoba, and in Winnipeg. Since Mennonites are highly congregational, they tend to be very pluralistic, so there are many smaller groups such as the Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC), the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church (EMMC), the Sommerfelder Church, the Chortitzer Mennonites, and the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (EMB) which have also started churches in Winnipeg. These smaller groups have continued to perpetuate their own conferences, and we trace their growth below. These smaller conferences, largely of 1870s background, were not as influenced by immigrants from Ukraine as the larger two were. Immigrants of the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s had become industrialized and modernized, so few joined the smaller, more conservative groups. Institutions are not a large factor either, because the smaller groups came to Winnipeg late and were too small to start schools and hospitals. Some attended schools run by the larger groups. In terms of attitude and social class, they were more conservative and tended to live in the older inner parts of the city. Two major growth factors, rural-urban migration and church planting, seem mostly operative here, so let us discuss them by conferences.

Evangelical Mennonite (EMC) Move to Winnipeg

The East Reserve was the stronghold of the Kleingemeinde Mennonites, now the Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC), established in 1875 and located 40 miles east of Winnipeg. Steinbach became the business hub and required considerable contact and trade with the city. By the 1950s EMCs had moved to Winnipeg and in 1951 some began to meet for worship. By 1954 they purchased their first building at 741 Redwood, and in 1956 moved to 533 Aberdeen in the North End, north of the CPR, close to the older inner city where many other European immigrants had settled. By 1957 membership stood at 55, which grew to 157 in 1968 (Figure 4). Unfortunately, Aberdeen Church burned in 1967. A large number of members moved across the river to start Braeside EMC Church in East Kildonan (closer to Steinbach, where many of the members' relatives were located). Others, fewer than 100, used the fire insurance to repair Aberdeen Church and continued to worship there. Membership has remained small.

Figure 4. Membership Growth of Other Mennonite Churches in Winnipeg, 1950-1992

Gospel Mennonite EMMC
Menno EMC
Sommerfeld /Chortizer
St Vital
Richmond Gospel EMMC
Morrow Gospel EMMC
Braeside EMC
Fort Garry EMC
Crestview EMC
Aberdeen EMC

members

400
300
200
100
0

1948
1952
1956
1960
1964
1968
1972
1976
1980
1984
1988
1992

By 1963 some EMCs began a Sunday school program in St. Charles School in western Winnipeg. In 1965 there were nine charter members. They began building at 271 Hamilton, where they started Crestview Evangelical Mennonite Church, the city's second EMC church. They completed it in 1982. In 1985 a few members left to help start the new St. Vital Church, and in the 1980s some families left because they wanted more charismatic emphasis. Membership rose to 123 in 1989 and declined slightly to 110 in 1992. In 1967, after Aberdeen Church burned, Braeside EMC Church was started in East Kildonan. There were 157 members at Braeside in 1968, 260 in 1991, and a slight dip in 1992 to 246.

A fourth Evangelical Mennonite Church started in 1976, with 26 charter members in the Fort Garry area. They began meeting for Bible study in 1974 and started services in Agassiz Drive School near the University of Manitoba. It was a mixed age group. They bought an old convenience store a block from campus and began meeting there in 1977. By 1983 they had demolished the store and started a new church at 602 Pasadena, finishing it in 1985. In 1990 a dozen members left to help start the St. Vital EMC congregation. They began with 26 members in 1976, growing steadily to 178 in 1992. They have had effective leadership, and many members have college training. They see ministry to university students as part of their mission.

EMCs began their fifth church, at St. Vital, in 1990. Al Friesen, former pastor at Fort Garry EMC, felt called to start this one. The charter service started with 35 members in 1990, in a building purchased at 11 Avalon Road. In 1992 there were 85 members, with more than that number attending services. Five EMC Churches were now located in five distinct areas of the city. Rural-urban migration was a major factor in this development.

Evangelical Mennonite Mission (EMMC) Plantings

While EMCs extended their churches into Winnipeg from Steinbach and the East Reserve, the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church (EMMC) development extended from the West Reserve (Altona, Winkler area) into Winnipeg. Each of these two smaller conferences followed their own members to the city.

In the early 1950s Bergthaler members and EMMCs met in St. Vital for Bible study in Sterling Avenue Mennonite Church, but they parted ways over differences as to which mission projects to support. In 1957 they moved

into the abandoned former Evangelical Mennonite Brethren chapel at 232 Nassau Street. In 1959 they built an addition and in 1979 added a foyer. In 1976 membership was 225. It grew to a high of 284 and remained fairly steady until 1988, when more than a dozen members left to help Richmond Gospel Fellowship. In 1991 there was a purge of members, dropping the number from 252 to 179, a decrease of 73 or more than a quarter of the membership at the time. This drop affected giving very little, so it must have been mostly a write-off of inactive or absent members who no longer attended or supported the church.

In 1967 Morrow Gospel Church began on Morrow Street because the original Gospel Church had become too crowded. The Morrow Church had 122 members in 1973. In 1976 they moved into a new building on 755 St. Anne's Road. This second EMMC congregation grew by 1980 to 218 members, with a high of 255 in 1987. Richmond Gospel Fellowship, a third EMMC Church, was begun in 1987 by the Gospel Mennonite and Morrow Gospel Churches, when they first met at Canadian Nazarene College with a founding membership of 18. They soon moved to Fort Richmond Collegiate, where they have worshiped since. Average attendance is about 55, including children.

Looking at the growth of the smaller denominations, we see that none grew as fast as the larger ones in the beginning because immigration was not a factor. Since they depended on rural-urban migrants, the earliest two churches, Aberdeen (EMC) and Gospel Mennonite (EMMC), grew steadily, but none reached a membership of 300 over the period of 35 years. Since their rural churches were also small, and their demographic mass was light, rural-urban migration was also limited. The EMC, EMMC, and EMB all have "evangelical" in their denominational names, but there is limited evidence that they were able to win many non-Mennonites to their fold. In fact, since 1992 the two Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (EMB) churches (Christian Fellowship Chapel at 465 Osborne, and St. Vital Community Church), are no longer Mennonite churches. The EMB denomination has now declared itself non-Mennonite.

Three conservative congregations, the Sommerfelder Church, the Chortitzer Church, and the River East Menno Gemeinde all began as recently as 30 years ago. In 1970 the conservative Chortizer and Sommerfelder groups met together, but they separated ten years later and continued meeting

separately for twenty years, the Sommerfelder at 345 Simcoe and the Chortitzer at Callsbeck Fellowship Chapel, with fewer than 100 members each. The River East Menno Gemeinde, at 825 Panet in North Kildonan, is exclusively German and was formed by Mennonites from Menno Colony in Paraguay. They organized in 1989 with 44 members, growing to 100 in 1992. Grain of Wheat Community Church on Home Street is a related communal church not formally associated with Mennonites but with many Mennonites in its leadership.

Table 2 summarizes our discussion of Winnipeg Mennonite church growth, by plotting both the number of churches planted and church membership in 1948, 1972, and 1992. The number of churches grew from six in 1948, to 23 in 1972 and 39 in 1992. There were six to seven times as many churches in 1992, a span of some 45 years. The MB Church numbers rose roughly the same, so that each of the two conferences represented more than one-third (36 per cent) of the total. The more conservative churches began later, with no churches in 1948 but five in 1972, which more than doubled to eleven in 1992. Total church membership increased fourfold between 1948 and 1972, from 1,620 to 6,330. From 1972 to 1992, it increased another 50 percent, from 6,330 to 9,050.

Table 2 Growth in Winnipeg, 1948, 1972 and 1992

	Number of Mennonite Churches				Church Membership			
Mennonite Conferences	1948	1972	1992	Percent of Total	1948	1972	1992	Percent of Total
Mennonite Brethren	3	8	14	36	750	2450	3100	35
Mennonite Church	3	10	14	36	870	3500	4600	51
Other Mennonites	0	5	11	28	0	380	1350	14
Totals	6	23	39	100	1620	6330	9050	100

In 1948 there were 1,620 members in the two MB and MC conferences. The 750 MB members more than tripled to 2,450 in 1972, 25 years later, and increased to 3,100, representing one-third (35 percent) of the total Mennonite church membership; an increase of 4.5 times in 45 years. Mennonite Church members increased 5.5 times during that time, from 870 in 1948 to 4,600 in 1992, representing 51 percent of all Mennonite church members. The more conservative EMC, EMMC, and Sommerfeld/Chortitzer members grew by almost four times from 380 in 1972 to 1,350 in 1992, representing 14 percent of all Mennonites in Winnipeg. Both churches and membership increased substantially in half a century.

Findings on Mennonite Church Extension

Christian Schwarz's eight natural church development factors seem to hold much promise for contemporary internal assessment of how churches are growing. Since Schwarz's guide cannot be used for past church growth, we developed seven external factors that we found greatly influenced the growth of Mennonite churches in Winnipeg.

Missions was the earliest way Mennonites began their churches in Winnipeg, as was common in many other cities in Canada. When most Mennonites were still living on rural farms and reluctant to live in the city, the few who did move there met informally and focused on Bible studies, or rural missionaries came there to start churches. In 1907 several MB families in the North End began to meet. Slowly this developed into a small church group, meeting first in schools and rented quarters and finally in their own building. After a number of moves they are now Elmwood MB Church.

Immigration was a major factor in the 1920s and after World War II. First Mennonite Church is the best example of how early Mennonite immigrants from Ukraine shaped the Winnipeg scene. Their young women came to work as domestic workers in the city as early as the 1920s. They needed spiritual services, which the church provided. First Mennonite Church was among the first to welcome immigrants and has become the city's largest church. The same process was true for North End MB. Sargent Mennonite began as an immigrant church after World War II, and Springfield Heights

served the same function in the sixties and seventies for South American immigrants. These new immigrants greatly enhanced church growth, illustrating the importance of immigration.

Rural-urban migration began in the 1930s, so that Bethel Mennonite Church emerged after World War II; large numbers of 1870s rural Mennonites came to Winnipeg from the Manitoba reserves, further enhancing church growth. Conservative rural Mennonites were reluctant to come to the city, but after World War II many who had seen alternative service came in droves to find work and higher education. These people created separate churches, because they felt less comfortable in immigrant churches tending to be more German linguistically and culturally.

Institutions played a major role, when immigrants in the 1930s began a newspaper and a hospital to serve their own people in German. The two national colleges begun in the forties became a major factor in attracting Mennonite youth from across Canada. Education joined with urbanism to foster love of the city, helping many to live there effectively.

Church planting followed, as churches grew in numbers and membership mushroomed, requiring larger facilities. While First Mennonite built larger buildings to hold their thousands, other churches like Bethel Mennonite encouraged the spawning of new churches in other parts of the city. A number of congregations spawned daughter churches in the process of new church planting. This strategy relieved pressures to build larger facilities, gave opportunities for leadership to experiment in new beginnings, and encouraged outreach, evangelism, and new life.

Class, culture, and suburbanization Fort Garry MB was the first church to move out from a mission in central Winnipeg to the suburbs of Fort Garry in the mid-fifties. Since then there has been a huge flow into the suburbs, as Mennonites have attained more education and entered the professions. Charleswood and River East MB are good examples of churches where teachers, social workers, and medical professionals are in the leadership. The colleges encouraged more education, which led to upward mobility and cultural changes in life styles, income, and occupations, all of which encouraged a wider range of non-traditional expressions of faith and life.

The Conference factor With few exceptions, churches were planted by Mennonite conference groups. The MBs started mission work in the North

End, and the North End MB (Elmwood) began in 1907. The CMCs started a church in the West End when immigrants in the 1920s arrived, to form Schoenwieser Winnipeg (First Mennonite). The Evangelical Mennonites, Evangelical Mennonite Mission, Chortitzer, and Sommerfelder conferences all began their own churches. Mennonite conference affiliation is one of the best indicators of when and why churches were planted. The MBs and CMCs began meeting together in North Kildonan but soon separated into conference churches. That was also true of the Chortitzer and Sommerfelder, who began together but later separated. The colleges began separately and church headquarters have developed separately. It will be interesting to see what will happen to the Jubilee Church, where CMCs and MBs now worship together. In 2000 three Mennonite colleges (CMBC, Concord, and Menno Simons) joined to form Canadian Mennonite University in Tuxedo at 500-600 Shaftesbury, illustrating a recent trend toward denominational cooperation.

All seven external growth factors, we found, have definitely operated in the past, but immigration and rural-urban migration appear to be fading in importance. Perhaps this is why some Mennonite churches are exploring Christian Schwarz's internal factors, which emphasize attracting members from surrounding areas to include more from non-traditional Mennonite backgrounds.

Our figures clearly show that the number of Mennonite churches has grown from six in 1948 to 39 in 1992, a sevenfold increase in 45 years. This increase has also occured in the major MB and MC conferences and the smaller conservative groups. We have demonstrated that church membership has grown from 1,620 to 9,050 members in these 45 years, which is about 3.5 times, although this varies somewhat by conferences. The two factors, immigration and rural-urban migration, which fueled much of this growth earlier, seem to have declined in importance, so that recent growth trends appear to have levelled off and a few churches have even declined in membership.

If continued growth is desired and essential for dynamic church life, it now seems appropriate to look at other external growth factors such as missions and church planting to see if their effectiveness can be enhanced. The other option is to look internally and see what help Schwarz's natural church development factors can offer, so that the growth of existing churches can be enhanced. Churches that can enhance both external and internal factors

will likely grow fastest. But how much growth is best? If members are uninspired, so that numbers decline, we seem to have a serious problem. However, if members are so inspired that growth is too high, we seem to have a "good" problem, which can be remedied by planting new churches, as Bethel and others have shown.

Notes

[1] J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger, *The Mennonite Mosaic* (Scottdale, PA; Herald Press, 1991); Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1990).
[2] Lyle Schaller, *Growing Plans: Strategies to Increase Your Church's Membership* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983); Schaller, *Looking in the Mirror: Self-Appraisal in the Local Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984); Schaller, *Innovations in Ministry: Models for the 21st Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).
[3] Raymond Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants." *American Journal of Sociology* 70:103-25.
[4] Gibson Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).
[5] Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Emmelsbull, Germany: C & P Verlage-GmbH, 1996).
[6] *Ibid.,* 40.
[7] Ronald W. Waters (ed.), *An Anabaptist Look at Natural Church Development* (Mt. Joy, PA: New Life Ministries, 1999).
[8] Interview with Robert Suderman, August 1, 2000.
[9] Interview with Debra Dyck, August 1, 2000.
[10] Terry Zimmerly, "Leaders Test Out Natural Church Development Strategy." *Canadian Mennonite* 2:17, 2001.
[11] In 1992 Bruno Dyck and associates at the University of Manitoba interviewed leading ministers or representatives of almost fifty Mennonite churches in Winnipeg. Respondents were asked many questions related to the history and development of their church. Membership figures were gathered for the entire life span of each church so that figures could be plotted. We decided not to redo these interviews but to update them, and we contacted some churches with related questions. Interview schedules were used to develop seven external growth factors which grew out of the data. We thank Bruno Dyck for use of his data and for his encouragement.
[12] Anna Thiessen, *The City Mission in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1991). Esther Horch, *C.N. Hiebert Was My Father* (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1979).
[13] Three MB churches were established before 1950. North End MB Church, the first Mennonite church in Winnipeg (1907), moved further north to College Avenue, and then across the Red River to East Kildonan, on Henderson near the Mennonite Printing Press and MBBC. It was renamed Elmwood MB Church in 1954. Businessman C.A. DeFehr was influential in getting it to move to the east side of the river, where more Mennonites had settled

as early as the 1920s. With the strong leadership of I.W. Redekop (lead minister 1953-67), the move to East Kildonan, and the support of MB institutions such as the press, the college, denominational offices and the North Kildonan community, Elmwood MB became the college church and increased to 630 members by 1965. Membership slowly declined, to 305 in 1992, for many reasons which we need to examine further by comparing other MB churches (Figure 1). North Kildonan MB Church, begun in 1928 on the east side of the Red River, had grown to 337 members by 1950 (Figure 2). By 1961 it had grown to 636 members, so that in the sixties there were two large MB churches in the northern Kildonan area. The dip to 565 members occurred because five new MB churches were planted between 1957 and 1963, when some folk came from rural areas, and immigrants from Europe arrived in the city and stayed. The start of the new River East MB Church affected the drop especially. North Kildonan MB membership declined from 737 in 1975 to 497 in 1976, a substantial drop of 240. Membership then remained fairly steady (between 500 and 560), because many other MB church plantings occurred. North Kildonan MB had become the mother church of two major new churches, River East MB (1961) and McIvor MB (1976). Church planting was the major factor slowing North Kildonan MB's growth. South End MB Church began in 1936 and moved several times in the near West End before becoming Winnipeg Central MB Church in 1960. It was part of North End MB Church until becoming independent in 1936. In 1960 the larger group of the church built what became Portage Avenue MB Church. However, 121 members who wanted to keep more German services decided to stay in their old church on William and Juno, and continued as a much smaller congregation which grew modestly to 221 members in 1979 and remained at around 200, dropping to 190 in 1992. With their strong emphasis on German it was harder to keep their young people, but they served immigrants who needed the German support. The three pre-1950 MB churches are still alive and well, but since the 1990s their powers to grow seem to be fading. Growth profiles of the three are rather different because of differences in leadership and the extent to which planting of new churches siphoned off strong members from the original core.

[14] J.H. Enns, *Dem Herrn die Ehre: Schoenwieser Mennoniten Gemeinde von Manitoba 1924-1968* (Altona, MB: D.W. Friesen & Sons, 1969).

[15] *Ibid.*, 1-5.

[16] Interviews of church leaders.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] A dozen members left Portage Avenue MB in 1964 to begin Brooklands MB Church. After 1970 they again began to grow to a high of 667 in 1985, with 42 transferring to Westwood MB in 1979, and 25 transferring into Portage Avenue MB from a country church. After 1985 fourteen transferred to Jubilee in Valley Gardens in 1986, and another 14 transferred to The Meeting Place in 1991, which resulted in a decline in membership to 556 in 1992, down to 428 in 1999. Four transfers out to other churches seemed to drain some of their young leadership. In the mid-1940s, North Kildonan MB Church was entirely German speaking. A small group saw the need for an English Sunday school in the area and began a program. By 1963 a new English group of sixty members formed Springfield Heights MB Church (later River East MB Church). It was a young, well-educated, professional church, with many members involved in the MB conference and interested in outreach. They had women in pastoral leadership in the

1990s, not in line with conference policy. Recently this has been changing. In 1990 a major split saw about half the members leaving to form Eastview Community Church, shown as a steep drop from 357 in 1989 to 162 by 1992.

[19] In 1947 First Mennonite Church had 400 members. That year they built a large new church on Notre Dame and Alverstone, meeting first in the basement and moving into the upper level in 1950. By 1956 membership was 1,250, rising to 1,450 in 1978, dipping to 1,368 in 1992. The dip between 1964 and 1977 was due to the beginning of several other CMC churches in the mid-1960s.

[20] The Mennonite Brethren first met in North Kildonan in 1928, and during the first years MC Canada members met with them. In 1935 the first CMC church was founded, because MB facilities were getting crowded. Many were members of the large Schoenwieser Gemeinde, to which First Mennonite Church also belonged. Members built a new church on Roch and Cheriton in 1951. After World War II many immigrants also joined North Kildonan; by 1956 there were 335 members, growing to 509 in 1962. In 1964 some 156 members left to form Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, which moved further into the suburbs, the reason for the sharp drop in membership (Figure 3). Membership climbed to 561 in 1988 and 525 in 1992.

[21] Bethel Mission Church originated to serve "Canadian-born" Mennonites whose parents had come in the 1870s and who were moving into the city to look for work or to go to school. These young Mennonites did not feel comfortable at the established Mennonite churches emphasizing German culture and language. A large influx of Russian immigrants also occurred. They began meeting at Bethel in 1937, but growth was slow because of the outbreak of World War II. In 1945 Bethel relocated to Furby and Westminister, and the new CMBC met in the Bethel building and became the home church for students. In 1955 they moved to Stafford and Carter, and later built a larger church. Bethel planted Elmwood Bethel in 1961 (now Burrows), Charleswood in 1963, and Hope in 1987, and had assisted with Sterling in the 1940s. Steep growth since the 1940s until 1960 arose when more youth came to Winnipeg, and the dip between 1960 and 1980 occurred when Bethel planted Elmwood and Charleswood, and other new churches were started.

[22] Seven CMC churches were begun in the 1950-69 period. Benjamin Ewert was active in beginning a third church planted together with Jacob Toews of Winnipeg. Mennonite Mission Church, renamed Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in 1955, began meeting in the CMBC chapel in 1950 and erected a new building in 1959, at Sargent and Garfield in the West End. They started with 45 members and grew rapidly to 323 in 1957, when Toews took 85 members out to start a new United Mennonite Church. It lasted less than three years, disbanding over leadership, and most who left returned to Sargent. In 1963 a small group left to join the new Springfield Heights Church, since it was closer. Membership climbed slowly from 400 to 500 over 25 years, because other new churches began during this time.

Martyrdom and Eating Jesus: Two Neglected Practices?[1]

Tripp York

What does eucharistic practice have to do with martyrdom? Are the two related, and, if so, how? Such are the questions I will address here as I attempt to uncover what it means to be a church predicated on the memory of its martyrs.

In the Catholic Church, the Eucharist renders martyrdom intelligible. That is, in consuming the flesh and blood of Jesus, one "becomes" Christ, therein making it possible to fully participate in the most glorious imitation of Christ: martyrdom. This appears to be reversed in the Anabaptist tradition. Based on the accounts given by early Anabaptist theologians, the ability to produce martyrs is what makes participating in the Lord's Supper an intelligible act. Due to the ethical importance placed on this sacrament by the early Anabaptists, it can be argued that martyrdom is what makes the Lord's Supper possible. Yet, if this is true, what becomes of this meal once it no longer produces martyrs? Does the limited partaking of this sacrament create an unlikely climate for the production of martyrs, or is it because we produce so few martyrs that we no longer have any basis for involvement in the Lord's Supper?

In this essay I will examine the theology of the Lord's Supper in the thought of the sixteenth-century Anabaptist Balthasar Hubmaier. By examining only Hubmaier, I am not attempting to ignore the multi-faceted account of the Supper in sixteenth-century Anabaptism.[2] However, despite the polyphonic voices and interpretations found in the sixteenth century, one can argue that the Lord's Supper provides the possibility for participation in the divine economy. Such participation engenders particular claims made on the participants' bodies. This event does not merely imply the giving of our lives for others physically, but also implicates the participants materially (these two components are never purely separable). In consuming the bread and wine, we commit ourselves to love one another in very distinctive ways. Financial burdens are shared and lives are sacrificed for others. It is at least this much

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that the early Anabaptists shared in common in their eucharistic theologies. I will, however, focus on one interpretation in particular: Hubmaier's account of the Lord's Supper as invoking a transformation, not in the elements, but in the participants. Such a transformation, Hubmaier assumes, necessitates a giving of one's own flesh and blood (just as Christ did) for others.

I also examine the Anabaptist "theology of martyrdom." This requires a brief assessment of the Anabaptist conception of the cross and how baptism implicates one in Christ's cross. What is discovered is the notion of a teleological necessity of persecution toward the church. Since the servant cannot expect better treatment than the master, the historical inevitability of suffering becomes necessary for the Kingdom to come to fruition. The true church is, therefore, the suffering/persecuted church.

Finally, how does this account of martyrdom constitute, or how is it constitutive of, eucharistic practice? There are very lucid lines running from baptism to martyrdom, but what is the direct connection between eating the flesh and blood of Christ (here, symbolically) and the shedding of one's own blood as the ultimate form of bearing witness to Christ? If there is a connection, which Hubmaier's theology seems to imply, what becomes of our current forms of eucharistic practice in relation to being a persecuted or non-persecuted people?

Balthasar Hubmaier and The Supper

> *We all are one bread and one body – we all, who have fellowship in one bread and in one drink. As one little kernel does not keep its own flour, but shares it with others, and a single grape does not keep its juice for itself, but shares it with others, so should we Christians act – or we eat and drink unworthily from the table of Christ.*
>
> – Balthasar Hubmaier[3]

When asked for his explanation of the Lord's Supper, Hubmaier responds:

> It is a public sign and testimonial of the love in which one brother obligates himself to another before the congregation that just as they now break and eat the bread with each other and share and

> drink the cup, likewise they wish now to sacrifice and shed their body and blood for one another; this they will now do in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose suffering they are now commemorating in the Supper with the breaking of bread and the sharing of the wine, and proclaiming his death until he comes. Precisely this is the pledge of love in Christ's Supper that one Christian performs toward the other.[4]

Missing is any account of the materiality of Christ in the elements. This does not mean that Christ is simply absent from the meal; it is rather the denial of the substance of Christ's body in the elements.[5] The bread and wine are memorial symbols reminding Christians of their forgiveness of sins at the expense of Christ's life. Though the bread is bread and the wine is wine, the Lord's Supper is instituted by Christ as a reminder of his sacrifice for creation. As often as Christians participate in this sacrament, they are reminded of what was done on their behalf. Such a reminder is not intended for mere observation; instead, it involves Christians in specific practices that render participation a reality.[6] The consumption of the bread and wine obliges believers to live out their baptismal vow – their pledge of love. The Lord's Supper is not just a memorial; it is a "living memorial." It is a sign of the obligation to love one's neighbor. Just as baptism concerns God, the Supper concerns our neighbor. The bond made in the Supper commits the baptized to lay down their body for Christ, just as Christ laid down his body for all.[7] For Hubmaier, within these two sacraments exist the resources necessary for enabling Christians to love both God and neighbor.

Hubmaier begins something of a revolution in sacramental thought. Rather than dismiss the term "sacrament," he redefines it: "[N]ot the water, bread or wine but . . . the baptismal commitment or the pledge of love is really and truly 'sacrament' in Latin; i.e., a commitment by oath and a pledge given by the hand, which the one baptized makes to Christ."[8] Hubmaier is not arguing that the elements are displaced by the actual pledge made in the receiving of them (for the pledge is best expressed through the taking of the elements); rather, he is suggesting that the ethical importance tied to receiving the Lord's Supper trumps all concern as to whether or not Jesus is physically present in the bread and wine.[9] What matters is not the metaphysical substance of the elements but the ethical character of the activity involved in consuming

them. It is not the transformation of the bread and wine that takes precedence; what is significant is the transformation of those who commit themselves to the way of Christ. To accept the gracious gifts of baptism and Eucharist is to commit one self to a way of life that, as it surrenders ownership of the body to Christ's Body, becomes self-denying. Hence, in his book *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, John D. Rempel argues that the Supper in Hubmaier's theology is an "ethical summons to imitate Jesus' surpassing act of self-giving."[10] This summons grants human agency an important role insofar as it demands a particular response to this gift of God. Such a response, however, is not intended to be fully carried by the individual believer; the agency of the church becomes the center of his eucharistic theology. Hubmaier's favorite phrase "the body of Christ in remembrance" necessitates a human response by placing the church as the subject of the sacrament. The "breaking of bread is a human means of recalling Christ and imitating him."[11] The Supper is not to be merely contemplated philosophically or sentimentally, nor to be viewed as a past reality; rather, it demands attention in the present by calling forth concrete actions – in conformity with the life of Jesus – from those who dine on God's good gift. The Supper is both a pledge and a witness that the Gospel has been accepted and made visible in and through the church.[12]

Interpreting the Pauline conception of the "communion of the body of Christ," Hubmaier claims that the bread broken "commemorates the communion of the body of Christ with us, that he is our own, for he gave his body for us through the drink of the communion of his blood which he poured out for the forgiveness of sin."[13] Through participation in the Supper, communion with the body and blood of Christ occurs. Yet, this communion is expanded to include not just Christ but one another. Hubmaier continues:

> As we now have communion with one another in this bread and drink of the Christ meal, so also should the body and blood of all of us be shared with each other, just as the body and blood of Christ is shared with us all. This is the meaning of the word *symbol* when we eat and drink together. . . . We conclude that the bread and wine of the Christ meal are outward symbols of an inward Christian nature here on earth, in which a Christian obligates himself to another in Christian love with regard to body and blood. Thus as the body and blood of Christ became my body and

> blood on the cross, so likewise shall my body and blood become the body and blood of my neighbor, and in time of need theirs become my body and blood, or we cannot boast at all to be Christians. That is the will of Christ in the Supper.[14]

Rempel comments that Hubmaier clearly maintains that the bread and wine "are outer signs of an inner essence here on earth. This essence is the Christian covenant of love."[15] The sacrament, Rempel argues, still maintains its formal sense insofar as it is an inward reality rendered visible by an outward act. This outward act is not merely participation in the act but is the binding of those who participate to a peculiar way of life. The Lord's Supper is more than just a symbol of love between one another, it is the constitution of the most ethical reality.[16] By participating, believers pledge to have their bodies broken and sacrificed just as Christ did. It is in the Lord's Supper that believers find the necessary resources to be capable of having their bodies broken and sacrificed. The Lord's Supper creates the possibility for Christians to fully imitate Christ.

The full imitation of Christ is, traditionally speaking, possible only in martyrdom. Hubmaier's "baptism of blood" intends to evoke images of this full imitation, as he assumes persecution and suffering are the logical outcomes of being a Christian. Yet Hubmaier is not primarily referring to martyrdom. When asked to define the "baptism of blood," he answers: "It is a daily mortification of the flesh until death."[17] As Arnold Snyder notes, Hubmaier is speaking "of the continuing path of yielding one's desires daily to the will of God. The 'baptism of blood' is a daily practice in the discipline of obedience." Nevertheless, Snyder continues, "the 'baptism of blood' could be much more than simply a 'mortification of the flesh,' or an ascetic exercise – it could be a call to accept the fact that one's own blood would be shed."[18] As Jesus was "distressed" until his third baptism (Luke 12:50), his believers also anticipate a final baptism: one that completes their participation in the Triune God. That a believer would be called to witness to the truth through martyrdom is always in the mind of Hubmaier (who was executed for his teachings). Therefore, preparation for this third baptism is made possible by daily disciplined obedience stemming from the grace bestowed on those who participate in the Lord's Supper.

Rempel comments that Hubmaier's theology of the Supper is attractive to a church of martyrs.[19] While the Supper's ethical importance need not

require the death of its participants, once persecution does occur, such an understanding of the Supper becomes intelligible. I must therefore examine what comprises an Anabaptist theology of martyrdom and look for any connection between martyrdom and preparation for martyrdom in the Supper.

Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom

> *The Anabaptist apocalyptic of martyrdom is the testimony of a theological realism to which God is more real than anything called 'world.' For this reason the fellowship of martyrs forms the race of the future, and therefore their persecutors must be shattered as soon as God's reality becomes manifest. For this reason the eschatology of the Anabaptists culminates again and again in the old triumphant phrase of the 'Theology of Martyrdom': 'They shall see whom they have pierced (Rev. 1:7)'.*
>
> – Ethelbert Stauffer[20]

> *To Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we have accorded the first place among the martyrs of the new covenant; not in the order of time, for herein John was before, and preceded with his death but on account of the worthiness of the person, because He is the head of all the holy martyrs, through whom they all must be saved.*
>
> – The Martyrs Mirror[21]

The first to be mentioned in *The Martyrs Mirror* is Jesus. This gives the impression that the Anabaptists maintain that Jesus is a martyr. Such a notion, however, is quickly dismissed. Jesus is not a martyr; rather, as the *Mirror* claims, he is "the Head of all the holy martyrs [through] whom they and we all must be saved."[22] The "Head" of the martyrs is not a martyr because it is through him that salvation takes place. For Christ's disciples, martyrdom is predicated on a soteriological account demanding commitment to the way of Christ. As Christ offers his body to the Father, Christians must also offer their bodies to the Triune God. Livio Melina argues that "the body of the Christian

is a place for the expression and the realization of the will of the Father. . . . What is essential in Christian life is bodily matter."[23] Once Christianity has eliminated the need for martyrdom it has, in the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar, "unfleshed" the faith.[24]

Ethelbert Stauffer argues that there is a teleological necessity for martyrdom. Following the Gospel of John he states: "The seed must die in order that the wheat can grow."[25] This notion is carried through the rest of the New Testament as Stauffer argues that the Epistle to the Hebrews

> pictures the *via dolorosa* (path of suffering) of the true believers throughout history in the style of the apocryphical martyrs' summaries, and then describes the sufferings of Christ and his disciples by the old figure of the "agon", the ancient contest or race. The Book of Revelation finally places the fate of the martyrs of the early church into the great framework of cosmic happenings; the death of the Messiah means the first and decisive victory of the *Civitas Dei* (city of God) over the *Civitas Diaboli* (city of Satan). In consequence of this, the old dragon which had fallen from Heaven rages with doubled ferocity, and the prayers of the martyred saints rise up to heaven until the number of these martyrs shall be full.[26]

Stauffer notes that the early church continued this line of thought as the first Clement epistle, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* clearly show. The imitation of Christ becomes the dominant theme in the early church as the passion of Christ becomes the "prototype for the path of suffering of all loyal disciples, even to the smallest detail."[27] He continues:

> The church of the first centuries interpreted the work of Christ by means of a concept of the "Theology of Martyrdom", and vice versa understood the fate of the martyrs through the fate of the Master. However, Christ himself is *never presented as a martyr*; rather, all the martyrs stand under the sign of the event of Calvary. Christ is not a model in a moral or symbolic sense but he is the archetype in a genuine sense of destiny.[28]

A genuine sense of destiny is operative because the "true church of God has been a suffering church (*Martyrergemeinde*) at all times; this is the basic conception of the Anabaptist theology of history."[29]

The cross of Christ realizes this basic Anabaptist conception of history as well as renders Jesus "Head" of the martyrs – though not a martyr himself. This conception of history requires an understanding of what Jesus' cross signifies. For the Anabaptist, the cross signifies God's patience with God's creation. A patience that Christians, if they wish to be faithful, must also exercise.

Anabaptists understand themselves to be, to invoke the title of one of Menno Simons's books, the "Church under the Cross." As Jesus lived and died under the cross, the church expects to do the same. Since the cross gives meaning and order to suffering, it is the very center of the Anabaptist theology of martyrdom. The death of the Messiah is both the climax of the persecution of all the faithful (prior to and after Jesus) and the triumph over evil. Jesus' death is the turning point in history towards a new era. The cross, therefore, becomes the defining moment in the life and fate of all disciples. As Matt. 20:23 intimates, the disciples stand under the necessity of persecution. Can they drink the cup that Jesus drank? Can they accept the baptism of blood with which he was baptized? Can they face persecution and death?

By living as a church under the cross, Anabaptists are endeavoring to sustain an ethic that is intelligible only if Jesus is who he says he is. The ecclesial formation and ensuing practices of the Anabaptist church (including the Lord's Supper) are intended to produce lives that are unintelligible if Jesus has not been raised from the dead. Such formation must take the shape of the cross, because the way Christ becomes Lord is the through the suffering of the cross. As John Howard Yoder explains, the cross is not a romanticized description of hardship: "The cross of Calvary was not a difficult family situation, not a frustration of visions of personal fulfillment, a crushing debt, or a nagging in-law; it was the political, legally-to-be-expected result of a moral clash with the powers ruling his society."[30] The cross is thus "not a detour or a hurdle on the way to the kingdom, nor is it even the way to the kingdom; it is the kingdom come."[31] To follow Jesus is to claim that "the cross and not the sword, suffering and not brute power determines the meaning of history. The key to the obedience of God's people is not their effectiveness but their patience (Rev. 13:10)." Therefore, the "relationship between the obedience of God's people and the triumph of God's cause is not a relationship of cause and effect but one of cross and resurrection."[32]

Cross and resurrection, coupled with the virtue patience, are the only legitimate responses to persecution. Armed violence suggests that it is possible to take control of history and do God's work for God. It rejects the patience God practices with sinful creatures and denies the normativity of Jesus. A hymn attributed to Michael Sattler opens with this stanza:

> When Christ with his true teaching
> gathered together a little band
> he said that everyone with patience
> must follow him daily, carrying the cross.[33]

The cross is the event that centers all history and guides God's people through history.[34] This is the basis underwriting the Anabaptist recognition of the necessity of persecution. For it is here that the martyr becomes a sign of divine election; an election that begins with baptism.[35] Prosperus states:

> Sanctify, baptism will indeed;
> But the martyr's crown doth all complete.[36]

The idea that baptism is the beginning of those whose end is martyrdom has deep roots in Anabaptism. 1 John 5:6-8 states that Jesus came by water and blood, and the Anabaptists took this to mean that the "right" baptism entails the cross.[37] Baptism is understood as a pledge of faith (1 Peter 3:21) to follow the master even unto death. Those who are baptized must expect martyrdom. It is what is assumed to be true election. These martyrs are chosen to serve God's purposes, which means the building of God's Kingdom. Tertullian's famous dictum, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," has been empirically confirmed. To suffer martyrdom is understood to be an honor, as it creates a people on the way to the Kingdom.[38]

As a suffering people on pilgrimage, they meet persecution with a very peculiar response: nonviolence.[39] The starting point for this response is located in what Dutch Mennonites called "lijdzaamheid" (readiness to suffer), and what the German and Swiss brethren labeled "Gelassenheit" (yieldedness).[40] The readiness to suffer is a given for those who are to be disciples of Christ. In a letter before his execution, Hendrick Alewijns warned his children to prepare themselves for imminent persecution. Their response to persecution, he adds, is critical to who they are. As Children of Christ they are

> denied and forbidden all revenge, and commanded to commit all vengeance unto God; not to resist evil . . . and to turn to him that smiteth thee on thy right cheek the other also, and the like; yea, to love one's enemies, to pray for your persecutors, and to flee from them from one city into another.[41]

Followers of Christ, like Alewjins, are sent out like sheep among wolves (Matt. 10:16) that are prohibited from retaliation. They suffer the hostility of the world according to the example of their master and are not allowed to return violence for violence (Romans 12:17). Rather, they shall love their enemies and pray for their persecutors (Matt. 5:44).

Such a theology of martyrdom necessitates an understanding of suffering and patience that has a teleological base: it appears as a "causal necessity in the struggle between the divine and the satanic orders. History could not be understood without suffering."[42] Through suffering, history moves toward its ultimate fulfillment. It is just this conviction that led martyrs, as well as non-martyrs like Menno Simons and Conrad Grebel, to denounce the violence of the early years of Dutch Anabaptism. "Not revolution and armed might but its very opposite – suffering – holds the key to the future."[43] Martyrdom, because it is the way of the cross, is necessary for the coming of the kingdom. "It had always been thus," writes Dyck. "Persecution and suffering were to be expected as natural and inevitable."[44] Suffering is not understood to be an end, but is the teleological means to the ultimate goal of eternal victory.[45]

Martyrs are understood as imitators of Jesus, who, by their imitation of his life and death, participate in his resurrection and glory. Imitation and participation necessitate each other, though neither comes naturally. One must be trained to imitate Christ. Such training, William T. Cavanaugh argues, "is not reducible to some principle such as 'love,' but is rather a highly skilled performance learned in a disciplined community of virtue by careful attention to the concrete contours of the Christian life and death borne out by Jesus and the saints."[46] The account of the Supper espoused by Hubmaier, though himself discredited as a martyr because of his refusal to accept nonviolence as constitutive of discipleship, provides the kind of training that makes martyrdom possible. The Supper makes martyrdom possible because persecution makes such an account of the Supper possible.

Whose Flesh, Which Supper?

> *A true Lord's Supper is held and should be seen as a true sign of the memorial of the death of Christ and a true participation in the suffering and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
>
> – Pilgram Marpeck[47]

What does this account of martyrdom have to do with the Lord's Supper? Are these two separate practices, or do they have a direct bearing on one another? Is it possible to have one without the other? If so, what difference does it make?

Rempel claims that because the Lord's Supper is the embodiment of the church's outward life, it is the *sine qua non* of the church.[48] He argues that Hubmaier's emphasis on the outwardness of the church is not borne of leisurely reflection but arises as a direct result of the possibility of martyrdom. Hubmaier's understanding of the covenant made in the Supper "helped him to find a theology . . . adequate to the needs of a persecuted church threatened with martyrdom. This he achieved by making the focus of the theology and liturgy of the Lord's Supper the living memorial in which the church remembers Christ's sacrifice surpassingly in its pledge to do likewise."[49] Such a theology prepares the Christian for the possibility of martyrdom, as it arises directly from a persecuted people who understand what it means to have their flesh and blood spilled for the truth.

Such a theology of the Supper assumes no dichotomy between the earthly and the heavenly, the spiritual and the physical, or the body and the soul.[50] It assumes that the physical is the mode of the spiritual, and, therefore, that the Supper invites Christians to a bodily communion. This communion is fully realized only as it takes the shape of an eschatological banquet. Though the feast here may prepare one for martyrdom, or, perhaps martyrdom prepares the way for the feast, it also – given the transitory nature of our bodies here on earth – readies one for a glorified version of the body. Therefore, martyrdom is properly understood only in light of the resurrection. The gift of the Lord's Supper is that it helps us to remember not only the death of Christ but his being raised from the dead. This is why Hubmaier said, "Truth is unkillable."[51]

Cavanaugh argues, and I think Anabaptists will agree, the Eucharist loses its eschatological import precisely when the church comes to feel at home in the world. He continues:

> Threat of persecution helps keep this in focus; in the early church the Eucharist was explicitly connected with martyrdom. Many early martyrs regarded the Eucharist as the essential preparation and sustenance for their ordeal. During the fierce persecution under Diocletian, the martyrs of Abitinae adopted the motto *sine dominico non possumus*, for they would have seen the Eucharist as an invitation to, and the beginnings of, the heavenly banquet of which they were about to partake in full.[52]

The early martyrs viewed the Eucharist as a participatory event in the passion of Christ. In like manner, the sixteenth-century Anabaptists also saw it as a participatory event that makes possible the radical imitation of Christ. The threat of persecution Cavanaugh is discussing produces the kind of people (martyrs) required to recover what it means to receive the bread and wine. Christ is not present in the eucharistic elements; rather, he is in the visible body of believers.

In all this, the basic contention is that praxis precedes theory. This "fleshly" understanding of the Lord's Supper is made possible due to the immanent persecution the early Anabaptist church faced. Once Anabaptists are tolerated, what it means to partake in the Supper begins to take on a more symbolic (symbol as merely representative, not participatory) understanding. This is not to suggest that it ceases to form Anabaptists into a people incapable of either sharing their goods or laying down their lives; rather, with the toleration of the Anabaptists comes a very substantial loss of what it means to live eucharistically. The Lord's Supper has to mean something other than the literal giving of one's life, because this is no longer demanded.[53]

Truthful accounts of martyrdom cannot be separated from the Lord's Supper because that division assumes our imitation of Christ can be separated from participation in the divine life.[54] Participation occurs precisely where our flesh becomes Christ's flesh, and this requires eucharistic participation. Hubmaier's conception of the Supper stresses *being* rather than *receiving* the body of Christ. In his account, we *are* the bread; we *are* the body. If our

understandings of the Lord's Supper become too sentimental, or *if* it becomes a table that invites both the committed and non-committed alike, then all formative capabilities in this feast are likely to be lost. Rather than strip ourselves of a valuable resource for resistance to the world, our lives should once again be shaped by the memory of those martyrs discovered every time we remember Christ in the Lord's Supper.

In conclusion, martyrdom is understood as the anticipated result of serious commitment to Christian discipleship. Liberation theologian Jon Sobrino is correct to argue that, at bare minimum, Christians who do not find themselves persecuted should at least question why they are not being persecuted.[55] Just as the church is the body of Christ, and Christ's body was persecuted, Christ is known by those Christians who give their bodies as he gave his. When Christians participate in the Lord's Supper they attest to this claim and pledge their bodies (that they may be broken as Christ's body was broken) so that the church is visible. This sacrament is, therefore, training in how to be the kind of people capable of producing visible witnesses. Truthful accounts of martyrdom are necessary in this world, not only because martyrdom should be anticipated but because such a witness is an argument for the existence of the Triune God.[56] The Anabaptist martyr Joos Kindt realized, at least against his persecutors, that verbal arguments bore little significance. It is only martyrdom that will seal his testimony. Hence he writes in a farewell letter: "I hope that the seal of this letter will be the putting off of my body."[57] It is this kind of witness that renders participation in the Lord's Supper an intelligible act.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to my Ph.D. advisor, D. Stephen Long, and an anonymous reviewer for their comments in regard to how I employ the word 'practice.' With the advent of his seminal work *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre has maintained something of a monopoly on the word. It would probably be more consistent with MacIntyre's infamous definition to argue that martyrdom is not a practice but is the fruition of other practices (such as the Eucharist, baptism, hymn-singing, etc.). However, I want to leave room for understanding martyrdom as a practice inasmuch as, at least in the first three centuries of Christianity, martyrdom is understood as a liturgical procession before the watching world. It is a highly cultivated skill that one must train for in order to perform it well. The training for martyrdom is not simply the constitutive practices that make it possible. The act itself takes on something of the character of a practice.

[2] The Lord's Supper signifies many things: it is an act of *anamnesis*; a memorial of Christ's death and sacrifice; a time for reconciliation and confession of sin; a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. I am not trying to lock the Supper down to one explanation. For a richer account of the various ways in which it is understood by current Anabaptist thinkers see *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 2.1 (Spring 2001).
[3] H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder, eds. *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1989), 75.
[4] *Ibid.*, 354. This response is in the form of a catechetical dialogue.
[5] According to Hubmaier, Christ cannot be present in the elements because he has ascended to the Father: "If he were present, then we would hold the Supper in vain and against the words of Christ and Paul. For where a person is essentially and bodily present, there a remembrance is not necessary. However, where he is not bodily present, then one celebrates his remembrance until he comes." Insofar as the believer makes Christ present in memory, then Christ is present in the meal. In this sense, the church makes Christ present, and, therefore, the church becomes the real presence in the meal. *Ibid.*, 333.
[6] In "The Lord's Supper as Viewed and Practiced by the Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ," John Mills laments the use of the word "observe" and opts for the term located in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, "participation." *The Lord's Supper: Believers Church Perspectives*, ed. by Dale R. Stoffer (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1994), 198. The language of participation creates a particular experience shaping how Christians understand the concrete implications of remembering Christ's death.
[7] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 70.
[8] *Ibid.*, 391.
[9] I thank an anonymous reviewer for correcting me on this point.
[10] John D. Rempel, *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism: A Study in the Christology of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck, and Dirk Philips* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1993), 48.
[11] *Ibid.*, 63. There remains a vital importance attaching to the act of each individual believer to respond. However, since each individual becomes the body of Christ, Hubmaier's use of church and individual seem, at this point, to conflate.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 75.
[14] *Ibid.*, 75-76.
[15] *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 56.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 350.
[18] C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1995), 93.
[19] *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 222.
[20] Ethelbert Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 19.3 (1945): 204.
[21] Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, 2nd English Edition, 23rd printing (Scottdale: Herald Press, 2001), 67.
[22] *Ibid.*, 69. Liberation theologian Jon Sobrino argues for an *analogatum princeps* of martyrdom

based on the idea that Latin American Christians and non-Christians die *like* Christ because they die for his cause. Therefore, the content of their subjective holiness is never an issue because their objective holiness makes them martyrs. Sobrino argues for an expansion of the concept of martyrdom premised not on *odium fidei*, but on *odium justitiae*. Cf. his *Jesus the Liberator* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books), 265-71. His account is untenable because he assumes that Jesus was for a cause or for the truth: God's Kingdom. Anabaptists maintain that Jesus is the cause – Jesus is the Truth. This leads to differing starting points for how martyrdom is understood. If Rempel is adequately representing Hubmaier, then Hubmaier himself comes close to this problem: "What we now do is to eat in faith that the Lord's body was martyred for us." *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 59.

[23] Livio Melina, *Sharing in Christ's Virtues: For a Renewal of Moral Theology in light of Veritatis Splendor*, trans. William E. May (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 110.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Ethelbert Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," 181.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.* "Imitation" can often be turned into legalistic obedience, and so many current thinkers use terms like "participation" to create the mood of "an eager entering into the very suffering of Christ himself." Cf. Cornelius J. Dyck, "The Suffering Church in Anabaptism," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 49.1 (1985): 15. Such a distinction between imitation and participation is, in the end, not very useful as it presupposes one can occur without the other.

[28] *Ibid.* The notion of archetype should not be confused with a Kantian account of the person of Jesus. In the Anabaptist understanding of martyrdom, there is a sense of destiny, a teleology at work that positions Christian martyrs after Jesus because of who Jesus is: the Son of God. Italics are mine.

[29] *Ibid.*, 187.

[30] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 129.

[31] *Ibid.*, 51.

[32] *Ibid.*, 232.

[33] Cited in Brad Gregory's *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 203.

[34] *Ibid.*, 197.

[35] Brad Gregory, in his impressive work *Salvation at Stake*, helps us see how baptism is so easily linked to death – especially after fifteen hundred years of baptism understood as the initiation rite into society. He claims that even to "ponder becoming an Anabaptist was ipso facto to think about martyrdom" (198). Executions, for Anabaptists, were a part of everyday life. Therefore, just as the apostles risked their lives, baptism implies the willingness to risk one's life. Baptism was the preparation for death – a death that was the confirmation of the very meaning of being Christian (201). As Gregory remarks, "Those who became Anabaptists were preselected for martyrdom." (211)

[36] *Martyrs Mirror*, 190.

[37] Stauffer, *The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom*, 207.

[38] This does not necessarily imply that Christians are to seek martyrdom. On the contrary, the first task is to flee, for Christians do not desire for their enemies to commit the sin of murder. Nevertheless, when faced with the decision to be either faithful or unfaithful, Christians must accept that such faithfulness may either keep them on the run or land them on a stake.
[39] I realize that Hubmaier never advocated nonviolence and even wrote a polemic against the Swiss Brethren for their adoption of the Schleitheim articles – in particular, number six. Despite his execution not being accepted as martyrdom (because of his account of the necessity of killing), his depiction of the Lord's Supper nevertheless proves valuable for a martyrs' ethic.
[40] Stauffer, *The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom*, 212.
[41] *Martyrs Mirror*, 754.
[42] Dyck, *The Suffering Church in Anabaptism*, 17.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] *Ibid.*, 22.
[46] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*: *Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 62.
[47] Quoted in *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 120.
[48] *Ibid.*, 88.
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] Cf. Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). If Hubmaier had held more of an understanding of the blending of heaven and earth, could he have conceded the real presence of Christ in the elements?
[51] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 407.
[52] *Torture and Eucharist*, 225-26.
[53] An interesting topic for research would be to examine how Christian Peacemaking Teams and missionaries in hostile environments practice and understand the Lord's Supper.
[54] Hubmaier answers the question of what constitutes the church by including The Lord's Supper. *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 352.
[55] Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness.* Trans. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 92. He says that persecution should be considered an "essential ingredient of the Christian life. If no persecution were at hand, in any form or any degree, Christians and their churches would at least wonder why, and they would regard the question as a basic one."
[56] Cf. Stanley Hauerwas's *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001). According to Hauerwas, faithful witnesses are not *evidence* for the existence of God, rather they are *arguments* for the existence of God. Leaning on the work of Bruce Marshall, Hauerwas adds that in the case of martyrs, their blood is not "proof" for themselves of God's existence, but their blood is a testimony for others of the existence of God. (210-15).
[57] *Martyrs Mirror*, 546.

Massimo Capuani. *Christian Egypt: Coptic Art and Monuments Through Two Millennia*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002; John W. Kiser. *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002; Mary Jo Weaver. *Cloister and Community: Life Within a Carmelite Monastery*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Whether it is a nun in habit or an Old Order person in a crowded public place, one encounters parallel attitudes of deference and discomfort. What to make of such folk who stand so clearly apart? Is their appearance – simple, outdated, black clothing – just superficially similar? Old Orders and monastics both try to live out the full counsels and implications of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: nonconformity, simplicity and poverty, nonresistance, mutual aid.

Does monasticism have anything to do with, or say to, Anabaptism? Debate on this question has raged for centuries, ever since Protestants in the Reformation period (Luther being one) and as recently as the twentieth century drew disparaging comparisons between Anabaptists and monastics. The debate occasionally emerges in the pages of this journal as well. I live out such tensions as I encounter ambivalence among Mennonites to the fact that I am a Benedictine Oblate.

Three recent books consider monasticism, and they all suggest that whether Mennonites claim monastic ancestry or not, we have much to appreciate and learn. *Christian Egypt: Coptic Art and Monuments Through Two Millennia* deals with Coptic Orthodoxy, a Christian stream that today includes nine million people and is the largest Christian community in the Middle East. Coptic Orthodoxy practises rich and elaborate liturgies, and boasts some of the church's greatest theologians.

This Eastern tradition had its greatest influence on Christianity by being a major originator of monasticism. Early desert father and mother experiments in solitude and community fed directly into western monasticism, as is clear in the *Rule of St. Benedict*.

There were many reasons for the emergence of monasticism, but one was rejection of the church's affluence and establishment under Constantine. Not only Anabaptists see "Constantinianism" as problematic. Desert fathers and mothers strove to live literally by Jesus' counsels, especially the Sermon on the Mount. We who advocate nonviolence and nonresistance can still be

heartened and inspired by their example. Furthermore, monasticism was intended as a movement by and for lay people; priests were suspect. Sound familiar? Anabaptists can also relate to the fact that Copts regularly experienced persecution, destruction, and discrimination, right until this very day. Many Copts now live in a world-wide diaspora. One remarkable fact becomes clear: Coptic Christianity not only launched hundreds of monasteries, but is a church deeply formed by monasticism. To this day, its most important leaders come from monasteries. And the Coptic Church today is experiencing dramatic renewal, under the leadership of its Pope, a monk.

This lovely coffee-table book details Coptic buildings (churches, monasteries), sculptures, and icons that still exist. The surviving buildings, some almost 2,000 years old, are remarkable, especially as most were built with mud. A great pleasure is the stunningly beautiful color photos of various artifacts. A problem with volume, though, is that it covers a lot, perhaps too much.

Mary Jo Weaver's *Cloister and Community* is also coffee-table size, but focuses only on a small Carmelite monastery in Indianapolis. Weaver, a noted Catholic theologian, has an amicable relationship with this monastery. She set out to write a history of its striking building, which looks like a medieval European castle. Along the way, she works in a brief history of monasticism (also noting its rejection of Constantinianism), a survey of Carmelite monasticism in particular, an examination of various aspects of Saint Teresa of Avila's spiritual theology, and the history of the Indianapolis community. She sometimes jumps too abruptly from one topic to the next. At times – in contrast with Capuani – she gives too much detail about one place. But those quibbles aside, her book is delightful. Much will appeal to the Anabaptist reader, especially the grounded sense of the importance of balancing practical work and prayer. Not everything will sit comfortably with the reader, however. The reality of enclosure is difficult to grasp (a concept now also rejected by these particular Carmelites).

The Carmelite nuns gained a clearer vision of how to relate and minister to the wider world. They moved, says Weaver, from sealing themselves from the world to "a long and prayerful journey . . . to a perception that the world itself is a sacred space." Once enclosed and visible to no one, forbidden to see even their family, they now have a wonderful website, www.praythenews.com, which, among other things, helps people reflect prayerfully on world events.

They have also produced an inclusive Psalter and one of the most useful and accessible Daily Offices currently available, *People's Companion to the Breviary*.

In some ways, *The Monks of Tibhirine* will stretch our sensibilities the least. The commitment of these Trappists to ministry to the poor and witnessing for peace relates well to Anabaptist priorities. In other ways, partially because of the resonance, this will challenge us all the more. The Trappist monastery at Tibhirine in Algeria was established in 1938. A turbulent century of violence in that country had cost 60,000 to 100,000 lives. In spite of repeated threats of violence, the monks insisted on a prayerful witness of love and hospitality among Muslim neighbors. Many recognized the spirit of Trappist monasticism as closely related to Muslim values. (Muslims are often shocked by how little Christians pray, a charge that does not apply to Trappists.) In 1996, however, Islamic militants kidnapped and killed seven Trappists in an act that shocked the world. It shocked Algerians too, and some saw it as a turning point in Algerian politics. The Trappists knew the risk of staying in a country where militants ordered all foreigners to leave, but declared that if they were to lose their lives to terrorism then they would make this sacrifice willingly.

Author John Kiser was struck by how well these monks related to Muslims, especially when Christians have "all too often been bad advertisements for Christianity – dividing and excluding, rather than uniting people. . . ." He admirably meets his purpose of telling "a story of love and reconciliation amid fear and hatred." The Trappists wrestled hard, and often, with whether to stay or leave. They were not interested in collective suicide. But in the end they opted for staying close to their suffering neighbors. They managed a witness of peace and reconciliation, even offering blessings to their killers, a remarkable story in an era that is terrified about terrorism. Of the books reviewed, I shall most likely return to this one. I appreciate its narrative quality and Kiser's insights into monastic life and history.

In the final analysis, it probably does not matter whether Anabaptists acknowledge an indebtedness to monasticism, but all three of these books challenge us to deeper faithfulness – and that is an indebtedness that no-one should ignore.

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Esther Epp-Tiessen, *J. J. Thiessen: A Leader for his Time*. Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 2001.

Esther Epp-Tiessen opens with the acknowledgment, "I never knew J. J. Thiessen personally." My own interest in this biography is linked to the fact that I did get to know Thiessen, when I was a university student attending First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in the early 1960s. The photo of J. J. on the book cover launched my eager engagement with this story of his life. His grin got me in touch again with the fun-loving, confident, and caring pastor he was for me during my university years. I also observed his right hand, which appears prominently in this portrait. That was the hand that I felt on my shoulder when J. J. spoke the call, "Jake, I want you to consider the ministry."

This biography chronicles the emergence of Jacob Johan Thiessen as a major figure within the Canadian Mennonite story. His story from his birth in southern Russia in 1893 to his death in Saskatoon in 1977 is deeply intertwined with significant developments among Mennonites in Saskatchewan and beyond. It is abundantly evident that Epp-Tiessen engaged in thorough research to portray the life and contribution of this gifted leader. The "Sources and Bibliography" section at the book's conclusion identifies numerous secondary and primary sources, including interviews and conversations with people acquainted with Thiessen.

A Leader for His Time is organized into eleven chapters, each focusing on a period in Thiessen's life. The first four chapters trace his beginnings in Russia, his schooling, his early vocation as a teacher, and his work with the initial emigration of Mennonites to America. Successive chapters chronicle the Thiessen family's beginnings in Canada, J. J.'s early ministry in Saskatoon, and his expanding ministry during the Second World War. Chapters 8 and 9 deal with his travels and committee work internationally and within the Canadian conference. The final chapters detail what the author views as major "winds of change" during the 1950s and 1960s, plus the ways in which Thiessen made the transition from active ministry to retirement. In each chapter, the author effectively weaves together Thiessen's biography with narratives about Mennonite life and analysis of the larger local, national, and international scene.

This monograph makes a substantive contribution. Epp-Tiessen is careful to support her telling of the story by referring to primary sources, but she also occasionally offers more conjectural types of interpretation. Internal signals help the reader to know when interpretation of history moves into more narrative embellishment. For example, the author introduces a section on her subject's early faith development with, "This much we can surmise" (17). On a few occasions she may be overly dramatic, as in comments about "the veritable gale" of change that Thiessen had to deal with during the 1950s and '60s. All in all, however, Epp-Tiessen has done a masterful job of presenting a balanced story of a man whose legacy looms large within Canadian Mennonite history. She lets the record of Thiessen's accomplishments speak for itself while also discussing candidly some conflicts in which Thiessen became enmeshed.

A Leader for His Time can serve as a timely resource for congregational, college, or seminary studies. Thiessen made his contribution as a strong leader with multiple roles and responsibilities. This book serves as a good case study for discernment about what constitutes effective leadership in the church today, and how expectations have evolved within recent generations. Case studies could also be done in other areas. How does one preach and teach the Mennonite peace ethic among people who are at various stages in their convictions about peacemaking and citizenship? How does one maintain unity within the church while remaining committed to certain articulations of Christian orthodoxy?

Another fascinating aspect of reading this book was to sense the social location of its author. Epp-Tiessen frequently comments that leadership patterns within the church no longer can be as male-dominated or hierarchical as they were during Thiessen's lifetime. J. J. would say a hearty "amen."

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L. Gregory Jones and Stephanie Paulsell, eds., *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002.

"The scope of our art is to give wings to the soul. . . ," so Gregory of Nazianzuz (190). This image by a fourth-century theologian provides an underlying unity to this book of essays. To speak about theological teaching as "art" is in tune with understanding a job or career as a creative vocation. To talk about giving "wings to the soul" is ambiguous and dynamic enough so that both the formation of the scholar/teacher and that of the students can be included. And the variety of viewpoints in these essays conveys both the broad scope of the subject matter and the depth of the conversation among fourteen Catholic and Protestant scholars. I sensed that the space for mutual learning created during one-week-long consultations held at the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion over three consecutive summers has borne good fruit.

The essays are gathered together under three themes which intersect in various ways. In the first section the focus is on the formative practices of the teacher, that is, on study and research usually associated with a very concrete location, the desk. To understand reading and writing as spiritual disciplines is to put a different spin on the term academic "disciplines". So does imagining contemplation as being central to the chaotic and very diffused life of a scholar. Yet, the connection between spirituality and everyday work is drawn deliberately in these chapters. Becoming attentive and mindful about what we read and write, and becoming attentive to both God and neighbor are intertwined. This section ends with an account of how one scholar was shaped by someone with whom she shared "vocational kinship" (75). Attentiveness to that kinship can enhance our scholarly journey.

The second section shifts to the classroom. But there is also a noticeable shift in these essays to new conversation partners, the students, who can tell us much about teaching/learning. Though the power dynamics of the teacher/student relationship are acknowledged, the emphasis here is on the mutuality of the search for truth. Despite the many obstacles, this openness to each other can turn a simple circle of learning into a "site of a bonfire" where "fleeting manifestations of the sacred blaze up, and the God who speaks

consumes us" (119). The context of teaching is explored and diagnosed in this section. As a result teaching can be understood as a ministry of hope or as a practice of ceaseless prayer. Whether the institution understands itself as an "abbey, academy or apostolate"(40), it will need to cultivate wisdom in order to meet the challenges of this new age of globalization and consumerism.

As the essays move to the institution in which teaching takes place, another agenda begins to emerge. What if jobs are not readily available? Can one still practice the vocation of a theological teacher in the "outback"? How does one discern one's calling when decisions must be made about administrative tasks and teaching? How are professors affected if the institution has different visions than their own? What struck me here was the important contribution of mentors on the journey of claiming our work as a vocation. Whether these mentors come to us in writings from the past or include colleagues and companions from church or university, their insights and support are very much needed.

I wondered whether the frequent use of the term "formation " signaled an assumption that theological learning is always a gradual process. Only small hints were given that radical transformation and conversion are also needed as we required to look at the world through enlightened eyes and informed minds.

For scholars like myself who name our work a vocation, this book encourages us to think deeply about what we are engaged in and is a stimulation for further thought. But it also contains a profound challenge to the utilitarian focus of postmodern educational philosophies. Therefore it is especially recommended for administrators in our seminaries and graduate schools who need to attend to the spiritual shaping of professors and students in the midst of demands for thorough job preparation and career planning.

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Lawrence Klippenstein and Jacob Dick. *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia: The Story of Abram Dück and His Colleagues, 1911–1917*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2002. Calvin W. Redekop. *The Pax Story: Service in the Name of Christ, 1951–1976*. Telford, PA: Pandora Press US, 2001.

These two books tell quite different and fascinating stories about Mennonite alternatives to military service – stories widely separated in terms of geography, time, political context, cultural ethos, language, and forms of service permitted by the government (and acceptable to the Mennonite community). Yet they reflect a common desire on the part of Mennonites to avoid killing in their countries' wars and, over time and on the part of many, a desire to find constructive alternatives to combatant service that would entail something of the sacrifice of combatant service but that would meet human needs, needs often caused by war.

Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia opens with an excellent short essay by Lawrence Klippenstein tracing the history of "Mennonites and Military Service in Russia" from the first Mennonite settlement in 1789 until the end of World War I. When conscription was introduced and Mennonites protested, the Russian government initially offered the opportunity for Mennonites to perform noncombatant medical service, but this was rejected. Instead Mennonite leaders negotiated an arrangement through which Mennonite young men would be placed in forestry camps near Mennonite settlements, with Mennonites managing the camps and covering basic expenses. There were reports of poor discipline in some of the camps and a concern about the significance of such work and its relevance to pacifism, a concern heard again later in the U.S. about some assignments in CPS and 1-W. The war with Japan in 1904-05 saw Mennonite alternative service expanded to include medical work through the Red Cross. Many young men were enthusiastic about this possibility, while church elders were more skeptical. After the war ended quickly, debate over appropriate forms of service continued, along with expansion of the forestry camps. By early 1914 more than 1,200 Mennonites were in the camps.

As war loomed on the horizon that summer, the editor of the Mennonite newspaper *Friedensstimme* asked, "Do we not owe it to our government

and Russian neighbors to show that if a war . . . broke out, we would be ready to serve the interests of the Fatherland [Russia], and to help the needy?" (22) There seemed to be agreement that this service should not include fighting, but should include an active binding up of wounds. This resulted in the establishment of hospitals in Mennonite communities and in the departure of many men from forestry service to work as medical orderlies. Working together with Russian volunteer organizations, Mennonites established a "Mennonite Units Service Center" in Moscow to administer the caring for and transporting of wounded soldiers. Medical service was apparently the major form of alternative service but forestry work continued, and 700 Mennonites supervised a large prisoner of war camp. Responding to war needs drew Mennonites closer to the war effort – an interesting and troubling experience, by no means unique to them.

The second and longer part of *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia*, written by Jacob Dick, tells the story of his father and a number of his colleagues who did alternative service in Russia between 1911 and 1917. Beginning with forestry service and moving to medical service, the account traces their experiences through narrative and a rich collection of photographs. Much of the text consists of excerpts from a memoir by John Mathies, a close friend of the author's father. It is a gripping story that opens a window on the dangers and wrestlings they faced during the war. Like others doing alternative service in later generations, they were exposed to realities far beyond their own relatively sheltered communities, and faced situations testing their strength and their convictions. The combination of narration and photos effectively transports us into their world. An impressive thread through the stories is the desire of these men to help others, often at significant risk to themselves. "I carried many a wounded or diseased person on my back," says one. "They were all so happy, whether friend or foe. To me they were all friends. I'm so thankful to God that I had opportunity to do this work. I like to believe the Mennonites were called to do this task and that they carried out this task as medical personnel in a trustworthy manner" (80-81).

The Pax Story is set in the mid-twentieth century and focuses on Mennonites in North America. It fills a significant niche in the larger story of Mennonite wrestling with war, and documents the development of the service ethos which has characterized Mennonites. Although it includes information

from a wide variety of sources and covers the entire twenty-five years of the Pax program's existence, it reflects substantially the involvement, memories, and documents of its author, sociologist Calvin Redekop. Thus it focuses mostly on the early years and the European side of the Pax experience. It tells of the effort to gain approval for service outside United States for conscientious objectors (something that had been sought in World War II but was denied) and of the strong sense of call to find a positive, costly alternative to military service. Good attention is given to the interaction between Europeans, especially European Mennonites, and MCC in the early years of Pax.

It is worthwhile to compare threads from these two books and raise questions about them. The alternative service programs they describe both arose as responses to conscription. But while Pax had its birth in conjunction with a renewal of conscription in the U.S., and while a large majority of men who served in Pax did so as an alternative to that conscription, there were also volunteers, especially from Canada. Pax did not consist only of conscripted men, as the program in Russia apparently did. In addition, *The Pax Story*, in contrast to *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia,* tells the story of only a small minority of young Mennonites drafted by the U.S. government in Pax's twenty-five years: 1,200 out of 20,000 men drafted served in Pax (19). (Another book, to my knowledge still waiting to be written, would tell the story of 1-W service during the same years.) How did these differences affect the two programs? Would a service program similar to MCC have grown out of World War I experiences in Russia had conditions permitted it?

Like medical service in Russia, Pax (1) grew out of a desire to bind up the wounds of war, rather than to participate in war; (2) grew out of frustration with the relative meaninglessness of some work to which earlier conscientious objectors had been assigned; and (3) represented a desire to do something peaceful, meaningful, yet somehow "equivalent" to soldiers' hard and dangerous work. In both settings we see a rejection of the "quiet in the land" mentality which seeks to avoid participation in war but feels little obligation to make substantial contribution to healing or peacemaking. Yet there also seem to be key differences. The early forestry service in Russia seems very similar to CPS, with Mennonites administering the camps in both cases. Yet during World War II, and in the Pax era, Mennonites in North America as churches did not support noncombatant medical service working in conjunction with

armies, as happened in Russia. Rather, most clearly in Pax, the focus was on meeting humanitarian needs of noncombatants. Was this primarily due to living and serving away from current wars, or picking up after wars? Did it represent a more critical, less "patriotic" stance toward one's own government? (I found the expressions of Russian patriotism from Mennonites at the time of World War I rather surprising.)

While neither of these books definitively answers how Mennonite Christians should respond when governments seek military (or alternative) service from us, they offer wisdom for any who seek a faithful answer. And there is inspiration in them. The stories they tell remind us that creative, courageous, and costly solutions to this problem have been worked out, however imperfect they might be. Even more, they press the fundamental question upon us – in times of no conscription no less than in times of conscription: How do we live out our faith as Christian pacifists in ways that exemplify rejection of war and love of neighbor/enemy?

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Kimberley D. Schmidt, Diane Zimmerman Umble, and Steven D. Reschly, eds., *Strangers at Home: Amish and Mennonite Women in History*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002.

This collection of fifteen essays has its roots in a 1995 academic conference at Millersville University in Pennsylvania, entitled "The Quiet in the Land? Women of Anabaptist Traditions in Historic Perspective." The conference brought together scholars engaged in using gender analysis as a tool for studying Amish and Mennonite history.

The title *Strangers at Home* articulates one of the book's recurring themes – namely, that women's experience has made women both insiders and outsiders within various Anabaptist communities. They are insiders by virtue of their existence and participation in the community; but they are outsiders because, as members of patriarchal groups, their voices and the articulation of their experience have been limited. The various essays examine

this insider-outsider dynamic within a range of historic, geographic, and denominational contexts, from the sixteenth century to the present, from Europe to Paraguay to the United States, from Old Order Amish to Quaker to evangelical Mennonite.

The editors and writers are self-conscious about their own "social location" and examine the insider-outsider dynamic as a methodological issue for themselves. They acknowledge, for example, the dilemma of academically trained scholars seeking to "uncover" and analyze stories of groups that have traditionally eschewed higher education. Such scholars may be insiders in that they have roots in the Anabaptist-Mennonite family, but they may be outsiders by virtue of the rigorous training that separates them from the people they are trying to study. There is a sense that the experience of being both inside and outside has something to teach us.

The essays examine a wide range of historical issues, sometimes offering sharp challenges to traditional interpretations. Jeni Hiett Umble, for example, explores the issue of class among early Anabaptist women; whereas previous scholarship noted that most Anabaptists came from the peasant classes, this does not appear true of women. Cathy Ann Trotta tells the story of Martha Moser Voth, Mennonite missionary among the Hopi people in the late nineteenth century and how her experience as a woman enabled her to become an insider in a way her husband could not. Beth Graybill explores plain dress and its multiple meanings for Conservative Mennonite women in eastern Pennsylvania. Margaret Reynolds analyzes a highly symbolic ritual of breadmaking among Old Order River Brethren and how it re-affirms women's subservient role in the community. Roy Loewen examines diaries, account books, newspaper columns, and family biographies to demonstrate the changing self-perceptions of twentieth-century Mennonite women in Meade, Kansas. In a concluding essay, Jane Marie Pederson argues that Amish and Mennonite communities have responded to the crisis of modernism and the threat of assimilation by shoring up male authority on the one hand and women's subordination on the other.

One might expect such a book to leave an overwhelming sense of the disempowerment of Anabaptist women at the hands of male patriarchy, but it does not. This is one of the book's strengths. It examines how women have acted from within positions and traditions of subordination to question,

challenge, and re-shape those realities. Women are not only "acted upon," they are actors themselves.

Canadian readers will be disappointed that their reality is not really reflected in this volume, except perhaps by inference. Although three of the contributors are Canadian, their essays are ironically about developments in Europe, Paraguay, and Kansas. Only one contributor, poet Julia Kasdorf, consciously examines the work of Canadian poets. If the book intended to speak to North American – as opposed to American – realities, as suggested on page one, it falls short.

I also experienced some discomfort in how a number of writers referred to Anabaptist groups exclusively as "ethnic" groups. While "ethnic" considerations do feature prominently in the life of certain communities, I felt that there is insufficient attention given to issues of faith and spirituality. Moreover, there is little acknowledgement that Anabaptist communities today may include people from beyond the original Dutch-North German, Swiss-South German, or Moravian streams. I wonder how the book will be perceived by Mennonites who are African-American, Hispanic, or who descend from some other non-European tradition.

Nevertheless, *Strangers at Home* represents a fine sampling of the work of a new generation of historians and other scholars using the lens of gender to examine Amish and Mennnonite history and, to some extent, sociology and literature. As such, this collection represents a fresh and much needed approach to Anabaptist studies.

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Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (eds.) *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Just as theory is privileged over practice in the academy, so in most religious circles theology takes precedence over practice. Since most Mennonite scholars before John Howard Yoder wrote very little or no theology, our language has languished, often seeming inadequate to the task of describing our own profoundly experiential tradition to other Christians. Sometimes it

takes theologians from outside our tradition to help us find new language. Yale professor Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, director of the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, and the other authors of *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* have therefore given a gift to the larger academic and religious world which we would do well to study, discuss, and address.

Volf and Bass have written and edited other books on which the current volume builds. Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Reflections on Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), broke exciting new ground in using current theory to bring the biblical mandate for reconciliation to life. Bass's *Practicing Our Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997) and *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000) helped to elevate the value of disciplined Christian living while enlarging the definition of what such living includes.

Practicing Theology includes several essays that not only offer a theology of practice but also ground all theology in practice, something even more radical. Some of the most important words in the book appear in the final chapter, where Volf writes, "my contention is that *at the heart of every good theology lies not simply a plausible intellectual vision but more importantly a compelling account of a way of life, and that theology is therefore best done from within the pursuit of this way of life*" (247). The italics underscore the contrarian point Volf is making, and help point the way for future scholars in the Mennonite tradition.

Defined by Bass as "patterns of cooperative human activity in and through which life together takes shape over time in response to and in the light of God as known in Jesus Christ" (3), Christian practices are lived theology. In "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices," a chapter co-authored by Bass and Lilly Endowment, Inc.'s vice-president for religion Craig Dykstra, the definition of practice enlarges. It includes activities that "address fundamental human needs in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world"(18). Their aptly named "problem of the too big and the too small" is a gap between large belief and quotidian practice that all thirteen of the writers try to close by reflecting on their own, different, traditions.

The one Anabaptist writer, Gilbert I. Bond, an assistant professor at Yale Divinity School and former assistant pastor of Chicago First Church of the Brethren, tells the only extended personal narrative in the collection. Bond employs a slightly exaggerated, ironic, style ("she was one of the tent-poles of the church – Brethren Churches don't have pillars," 143) in a story that describes numerous clashes between worship and service practices in the Brethren and Afro-Baptist communities. The methodology, if not the tone, might be useful to other Anabaptist scholars. Those involved in educational leadership will find L. Gregory Jones's chapter helpful for building up an Anabaptist theology of education.

The final chapter by Volf is theological writing at its best, at once layered with allusion to his vast biblical scope and his knowledge of thinkers across human history and at the heart's core, simple and profound. Volf artfully complicates, simplifies, and complicates again with the result that he does not tie up the ends of a paradox into a perfect bow. Instead, he makes a series of bows and lets the ends free to play out with the assumption that by God's grace they finally complete the circle.

Like all collections, this book will offer more to some readers than to others, and some chapters may not appeal at all. The lingering effect, however, will be to inspire desire for intellectual, spiritual – incarnate – abundance. Dykstra and Bass point to this state of grace at the end of their chapter by quoting Ephesians 3, wherein we find testimony to the "breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ" which is "beyond knowledge."

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Thomas L. Shaffer, *Moral Memoranda from John Howard Yoder: Conversations on Law, Ethics and the Church between a Mennonite Theologian and a Hoosier Lawyer.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002.

Review One

Much of John Howard Yoder's most valuable material is often the hardest to find. Yoder was a prolific writer of papers and oral presentations that may or may not have made it into print. Furthermore, because Yoder liked nothing more than to attend the lectures of others across a wide field of disciplines, there to engage in post-lecture Q&A discussion, a goldmine of some of his best work never was written down or polished for publication. I have seen some European theologians followed around constantly by a bevy of assistants, writing down every word the master says, and from which results an industrial-sized output of large tomes and journal articles. I am sure many have shared my fantasy of such a bevy for JHY! Lately we have been getting the next best thing, as various collected essays are beginning to appear. Yet no matter how scattered and obscure the source journals for these collections, they still contain items polished for publication. What is missing is broader access to Yoder's 'Table Talk' material, the ad hoc, off-the-cuff, dialogical responses and reactions that have the rough edges showing through. This is the kind of material we find in Shaffer's book, and a welcome addition to Yoderiana it is.

Thomas L. Shaffer has been for many years a highly respected professor of law at Notre Dame University, where Yoder also taught. A Roman Catholic, he shares many of Yoder's basic Christian convictions and beliefs, and over a fifteen-year period he engaged Yoder in a significant exchange of letters, memoranda, emails and mutually critical discussion of essays, lectures and books, focused most specifically on law and government, but also ranging widely over other topics. Happily, Shaffer filed away such material, and this is the cache from which this book emerges.

Just as this volume emerged from interdisciplinary dialogue, people from various disciplines will find different sections most important and interesting. My own interests were captured by recurring discussions of how those holding minority moral convictions (especially, but not limited to, pacifism) could be most effective as citizens in a pluralistic society. Here we find Yoder's reactions to, and criticisms of, the books and lectures of visitors to Notre

Dame such as Stephen Carter, and his views on topics such as 'The Committee for Waco Justice' and the emerging Communitarian movement in political philosophy. Characteristically, when challenged by an ethical dilemma, Yoder is most likely to re-examine the historical and philosophical premises leading up to it and to suggest that we may be asking the wrong question or asking the right question wrongly. This is very instructive but also frustrating, as Yoder rarely, if ever, will come back around and indicate on which horn of the dilemma he sits in terms of the wider social discussion.

While this book focuses on John Howard Yoder, and that will be what most interests readers of this journal, it should also be noted what an able and probing dialogue partner Thomas Shaffer is. Had a future historian run across these notes, memoranda, and email messages in the raw, it is doubtful that such a meaningful narrative could have been produced. Shaffer does much more than string together raw data, and readers interested in pursuing his own creative and original analyses of major issues of law and religion will also find this book a valuable resource.

Shaffer has tried to make clear what in this volume is part of his dialogue with Yoder and what is present connecting narrative, by placing dialogical material in bold print throughout. However, it seems that a good number of paragraphs appearing in bold are clearly later reflective narrative. In general, Wipf and Stock relies heavily on authors to do their own critical editing of manuscripts, but the end product would have benefited from the critical eye of a professional text and layout editor. This does not at all, however, detract from having this valuable resource made available to the scholarly community.

Daniel Liechty, Normal, IL

Review Two

Thomas Shaffer, who describes himself as "a lawyer anxious to be a Christian" (iv), is a long-time colleague of John Howard Yoder's from the Notre Dame law school. In this little book (just 130 pages) he recreates discussions which he had with Yoder on law and theology, by assembling notes, correspondence, and other unpublished material from both his and Yoder's files, it is material that was mainly written in the 1990s. He uses Yoder's published works only

sparingly. The reader is able to easily follow the conversations between the two, with Shaffer's writing appearing in plain type while Yoder's assembled comments and rejoinders are in bold.

Shaffer gathers together his correspondence with Yoder on such topics as conscientious objection to military service, the death penalty, and civil disobedience. Not surprisingly, the subject of Christians as lawyers interests Shaffer the most. Yoder was frequently puzzled by the way that Shaffer posed questions to him. One that seemed to puzzle him most was Shaffer's concern that practicing law might in principle or in particular circumstances conflict with one's duty as a Christian. He felt that Shaffer saw lawyers as burdened with the question of divided loyalties to Christ and the state in a way that other professionals are not. In a 1991 letter Yoder warns about limiting the question of obedience to lawyers: "I would also ask whether a Christian can be a doctor, or a university professor, or a capitalist. My point is that any vocational choice has the burden of proof for a disciple of Jesus. . . . By linking this only with law you lay me open to a distortion of the importance of the issues of state and law as worse than something else. I have encouraged Mennonite young people to go into law. I do not see the polar opposition between Mennonite and legal identity which is promoted by the group of Mennonite lawyers with which you once met. The right way to put the question as ethics rather than pastoral care would be 'under what conditions can a disciple of Jesus be a lawyer?' or 'what kind of lawyer would a disciple of Jesus praise God by being?'"(91).

A significant problem with this book is that it lacks a clear purpose. In the preface, Shaffer asserts that there is "an implicit theology of law, a jurisprudence and a legal ethic" in Yoder's theology. It seems that Shaffer intends to spell out this implicit theology, and since he was the usual recipient of Yoder's thoughts on law, it is to be expected that their respective files would be Shaffer's primary support for such a thesis. But Shaffer does not indicate what the book's purpose or who its intended audience is, and we never do see this implicit theology of law. Instead, we are privileged to eavesdrop on several scattered discussions between him and Yoder. The ordering of the chapters and their sections seems arbitrary. Yoder's remarks are enjoyable to read, but they do not add anything to his published corpus. Even on the specific question of the law, there is little here which a keen reader of the published works could not extrapolate from them.

Also unsettling is Shaffer's tendency to make extraordinary claims for Yoder which are not supported by either his published works or the material presented in this book. For example, in one place he asserts: "John turned to the Bible as if it were a charter for law and government . . ." (vi). Or, in another questionable attempt to make Yoder's theology appear to be foremost addressing legal issues, he tacks the word "jurisprudence" onto politics. Shaffer writes: "He [Yoder] argued that politics (and jurisprudence), taken up in the community of the faithful, will turn out both more reliable and more critical than politics (and jurisprudence) taken up in the civil community or in the nation-state" (14). The simplistic connection between politics and jurisprudence is also reflected in Shaffer's characterization of Yoder's article "Ethics and Eschatology" as coming "as close as anything I know about to expressing John's jurisprudence" (28). We are not told how the article expresses Yoder's jurisprudence nor does Shaffer define that term. He merely proceeds to reproduce a large portion of the article over the next couple of pages. Just as puzzling is Shaffer's decision to quote from the rough copy of the paper in Yoder's file rather than the published version from *Ex Auditu* (1990).

Moral Memoranda from John Howard Yoder is not a book that scholars will find useful for research on Yoder's theology. There are thinkers whose unpublished writings and correspondence add to their published works; based on what is presented here, I do not believe that Yoder is one of them. Nevertheless, this volume will be enjoyed by those who read it for what it is: pieces of conversation, notes, and fragments of papers. It is regrettable that Shaffer does not consistently present the file material in this way rather than attempting to package it as "Yoder's jurisprudence." Notwithstanding some of these problematic characterizations of Yoder's thought, Shaffer is usually frank about his nonspecialist maneuverings in theology. Yoder took Schaffer's questions seriously and responded to them generously, and immersed himself in the books and articles which his friend sent his way. Some readers may even want to investigate some of that scholarship on law and Christian discipleship which Shaffer brings to our attention, as he once did toYoder's.

Paul Gallagher, Religious Studies, McMaster University

Richard N. Longenecker, ed., *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Prayer is a topic that has not been discussed at great length in New Testament studies, and this collection of essays is a welcome addition to the discipline. The essays are grouped into three sections – the first is titled "The Setting." It includes "Prayer in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible," by Christopher R. Seitz; "Prayer in the Greco-Roman World," by David E. Aune; "Prayer in Jewish Life of the First Century as Background to Early Christianity," by Asher Finkel and "Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls," by Eileen M. Schuller. These four essays, although limited in what they say because of the scope of material covered, are most interesting and helpful. Seitz's comments about sacred naming and its power is a crucial insight for understanding biblical prayer. Aune's description of Greco-Roman prayer is likely new material for many. Aune distinguishes between reciprocity as the characteristic basis of Greco-Roman prayer and the promises God made to the people as the characteristic basis of biblical prayer. Finkel's description of first-century *avodah* (the way of awe and love) is delightful. He gives readers a "feel for" how Jesus experienced his faith, plus a wealth of information on practices of devotion that illuminate a host of NT references. Schuller's comments on the Dead Sea Scrolls are also fascinating, prompting the question of whether the practices of the Daily Office have their roots in the prayer routines of this community.

The second section, "Jesus and the Gospels," includes Stephen Farris's "The Canticles of Luke's Infancy Narrative: The Appropriation of a Biblical Tradition;" "Jesus – Example and Teacher of Prayer in the Synoptic Gospels," by I. Howard Marshall; "The Lord's prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer," by N. T. Wright; and Andrew T. Lincoln's "God's Name, Jesus' Name, and Prayer in the Fourth Gospel." Farris's real contribution comes in his analysis of how the canticles emerge from Israel's "river" of praise tradition. Marshall compares how each synoptic evangelist uses the concept and theme of prayer. Two strengths of this article are the clarity of the discussion of *Abba* as a name for God and of how prayer fits into Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom. Wright exegetes the Lord's Prayer as an "exodus" prayer, demonstrating how each line resonates with an exodus theme, and calls the person of prayer to be a "New Exodus person." Lincoln describes how prayer

functioned in the intimate relationship between Jesus and God in John's gospel, and analyzes John 17 as an example of that relationship.

The final section, "Acts through the Apocalypse," includes "Persevering Together in Prayer: The Significance of Prayer in the Acts of the Apostles" by Joel B. Green; "Prayer in the Pauline Letters," by Richard N. Longenecker; "Finding Yourself an Intercessor: New Testament Prayer from Hebrews to Jude," by J. Ramsey Michaels, and Prayer in the Book of Revelation" by Richard Bauckham. The first three do more cataloguing of information than most of the other articles. Much of it is useful but makes for tedious reading. But Green's article has an intriguing analysis of how prayer in Acts lends itself to boundary dissolution rather than boundary maintenance. And Longenecker makes an interesting correlation between Paul's letters and the Jewish prayers, particularly the *Shemoneh Esreh,* or "Eighteen Benedictions," that Paul would have grown up praying. Michaels offers a nice, compact survey of the general epistles; I especially enjoyed his lifting out the theme of intersession as the common thread in a diverse group of texts. Bauckham's article on Revelation is fascinating. The author examines the relatively few mentions of prayer in the document, relating them to questions of practical theodicy raised in other parts of the biblical record, particularly the Psalms, and to questions of the mission of the kingdom, relating them to the final, eschatological "prayer for everything" where vengeance is dissolved in the conversion of the nations – Come, Lord Jesus.

This is a book I will use in teaching and church work for years to come. Of course it has weaknesses – I would have welcomed more women's perspectives, particularly on a topic such as the addressing of God as Father, and an article that attempted to do some synthesis of the NT material – an integrative effort similar to what Seitz does for the Hebrew Bible, for instance. But as a whole it is a wonderful addition to a pastor or teacher's library. For that matter, it is a book I would recommend for any praying Christian.

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David Weaver-Zercher. *The Amish in the American Imagination*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

While the Amish may remain "the quiet in the land," many who seek to represent them do not. Throughout the twentieth century spokespersons for Pennsylvania German groups, voices in the US media, tourism entrepreneurs, novelists, and Hollywood movie directors made public and persuasive statements about who the Amish are and what they mean. In *The Amish in the American Imagination* David Weaver-Zercher reads these public statements (both linguistic and visual) in their historical context to display these meanings and how they have functioned in the US popular imagination. In addition, the author seeks to decipher from these meanings their authors' intentions. Thus he gives us a glimpse into the "domestication" of the Amish, how they have been made to signify for the benefit of the rest of us. By constituting the Amish according to our needs, desires, fears, and anxieties, "domesticators" have made the Amish soothe our souls, whether by constituting them as our "saving remnant" or as our "fallen saints" (185).

This book makes a critical intervention into "Amish studies" by turning the gaze typically focused on the Amish toward those doing the gazing – researchers, tourists, Hollywood directors, et al. Domesticators' efforts to constitute the Amish as exotic Americans have been crucial in attracting the tourist gaze, and that gaze in turn has shaped Amish life. As an inquiry into the dynamics of this domestication, this book raises critical questions for all of us, whether we are scholars or tourists, religious cousins or Hollywood movie directors, novelists or entrepreneurs, about who we are and what we are doing whenever we represent the Amish. Importantly, Weaver-Zercher makes no prescription for our engagement with the Amish. But he positions himself in a manner we may consider adopting ourselves – as one who seeks understanding of self and culture in the context of the other as other (i.e., different) rather than trying to constitute the other in a certain way in order to effect some desired understanding of the self.

This book also serves as good history. In chapter 4, for instance, Weaver-Zercher tells fascinating stories about authors, novels, audiences (real and imagined), and the Mennonite Publishing House that help us understand the pressures under which the MPH was working in the third quarter of the twentieth century. Not only does such history provide insight into how certain

representations of the Amish came to be published and popularized, but also how the MPH was working to tell the "truth" about the Amish, to represent them in positive ways, and to operate in a financially self-sustaining manner.

This book should be on the reading list of anyone interested in "Amish studies." Beyond that readership, sociologists, anthropologists, communication scholars and historians interested in how sub-cultures are represented by others will learn much from it. But it is not just for scholars. All cousins of the Amish should read this book, not only in order to learn how our representations of the Amish have shaped both them and us, but also to squarely face the questions emerging out of that relationship.

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Anna Lännström, ed., *Promise and Peril: The Paradox of Religion as Resource and Threat*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

Promise and Peril: The Paradox of Religion as Resource and Threat is an eclectic collection of seven essays, lectures that were initially presented at the Boston University Institute for Philosophy and Religion. Outlined under "Religion and Politics" and "Religion in Itself," the essays clarify the "ambivalence of the sacred." Religions, though intrinsically value-neutral, have the capacity to produce the best or worst of human endeavor.

Following Karen Armstrong's strong essay on fundamentalism, writers focus on religions in particular places or distinct concepts. Authors are Marc Gopin, Gerald James Larson, Bhikhu Parekh, Huston Smith, Ian Reader, and Wendy Doniger. They examine negotiations between Jews and Muslims in Israel and Palestine, interactions between Pakistan and India over nuclear capability, issues that pose state-religion questions, the "entheogenic" quality of religious awe (see below), the Aum movement's brief but perilous development in Japan, and five paradoxes within Hinduism.

A test of any world faith is whether it leads to compassion – whether selfishness decreases and empathy for others increases. Yet, "almost all

religions contain traditions that support an inferior status for women" (69). A basic problem as well as strength (peril and promise), then, of religious traditions and texts is their ambiguity. A given religious idea can be interpreted in such different ways; texts are open to diverse explanations. The Aum leader Asahara could easily find teachings to fit his worldview from Buddist texts and the New Testament book of Revelation. The prevailing mindset also determines approach. A Partition or Discourse mindset – whether to resist or favor dialogue, mutual understanding, and synthesis – shapes attitudes and actions between adherents of Islam and Hinduism in India.

According to Armstrong, fundamentalists often begin by critiquing their own group but move beyond that to fault modern secular society. People choose new expressions of piety, one being fundamentalism, when unable to be religious as before. Or, if they are deeply fearful of being blotted out, a pent-up helplessness, or hatred, or intense feeling of inferiority can fuel their religious militancy. September 11 taught some in the US about how its support of repressive regimes, its thwarting of positive change for many West/Central/South Asian people, led extremists to be violent. So, also, perceived arrogance among countries with 'approved' nuclear power leads some Indians and Pakistanis to resent their own poverty and feeling of being inferior. They may choose to nuclearize in order to divert attention or to awaken national pride.

Gopin writes about peacemakers in circumstances of conflict between religions. Third parties worsen the problem if they "do not have the discipline of 'radical empathy' simultaneously with all sides" (29). People of different faiths need to learn not to demonize the other. They reduce tension if they *together* mourn, study, help the poor, and care for the land. But biased leaders may see such cooperation as betrayal.

Attitudes toward leaders add further peril as surely as promise. Intense devotion toward Asahara led to a dangerous development among Aum followers – the expectation to obey him totally. "Violence became acceptable and legitimate when ordered by the guru, and his authority became paramount and unquestioned" (96). Between 1984, the beginning of the movement, and 1995, the year of an attack on people in a subway, the "paradox of religion" emerged. Initially intent to spiritually transform and save the world, Aum followers came to believe that only the devout, chosen few deserved to live. They killed in order to 'save' those doomed.

Smith discusses the paradox of awe. This central religious emotion unites two emotions – fear and fascination. He explains how *entheogens* – nonaddictive plants and chemicals – can prompt mystical experiences. He identifies both their perils and promises. Doniger explains paradoxes that prompt degrees of violence within Hinduism. She provides insight into *ahimsa*, a term for nonviolence or noninjury. It refers to "the absence of the desire to injure or kill"; it reflects a "state of mind, not a policy for behavior" (111).

Having accepted the disparate nature of these chapters, I found them to be quite informative. The essay on state-religion questions intrigued me the least, although I agree with the principle that the "state should be neither identified with nor indifferent to religion" (62). An essay that directly addresses Christian perils and promises would enhance the book, especially if readers are primarily Christians who reflect less often on the perils of their faith. Anyone who deals with issues of conflict between religions will benefit from reading this collection. Honesty about both the perils of religion and the promises is essential.

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